

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TAXICAB COMMISSION

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FULL COMMISSION MEETING

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WEDNESDAY,

MARCH 14, 2007

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The Commission convened at 10:00 a.m.
in Room 204, 2041 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C., Doreen
Thompson, Interim Chairperson, presiding.

PRESENT:

DOREEN E. THOMPSON, Esq. Interim Chairperson
STANLEY W. TAPSCOTT, Vice Chairperson
INDER RAJ PAHWA, Commissioner
THERESA N. TRAVIS, Commissioner
THOMAS E. HEINEMANN, Commissioner
A. CORNELIUS BAKER, Commissioner

MARCELINE D. ALEXANDER, ESQ., INTERIM GENERAL
COUNSEL AND INTERIM SECRETARY

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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10:13 a.m.

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INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Good

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morning, everyone. I would like to call this

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meeting to order. For those who I have not

9

had a chance to meet, I'm Doreen Thompson. I

10

am the Interim Chair of the D.C. Taxicab

11

Commission.

12

Many of you probably met me before

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as the General Counsel. One thing we'd like

14

to do, for those who have not been here

15

before, so I have the Commissioners, the

16

people on the dais introduce themselves. Mrs.

17

Travis, we'll start with you and tell the

18

folks what panel you serve on and what -

19

COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: I'm Theresa

20

Travis, and I'm a public member, and I sit on

21

the Panel for Rates and Rules.

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COMMISSIONER PAHWA: Inder Raj

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1 Pahwa, I am a member of industry, and I serve
2 with Ms. Wilson who has been -

3 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Stanley
4 Tapscott, Panel on Consumer and Industry
5 committee.

6 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: Tom
7 Heinemann on Rates and Rules.

8 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you,
9 and sitting next to me is Marceline Alexander,
10 and she has been detailed from the Office of
11 the Attorney General and has been serving as
12 the interim General Counsel providing legal
13 services, and as you may know, also the
14 General Counsel serves as the secretary to the
15 Commission, officially as the Secretary to the
16 Commission.

17 Usually we begin our meetings with
18 a moment of silence, and so if we could just
19 do that for a moment. Thank you.

20 We also - a little housekeeping,
21 does everybody have a copy of our agenda? We
22 have a fairly ambitious agenda today. I do

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1 want to point out because this has always been
2 a concern of persons in the audience that they
3 do not get a chance to participate.

4 The agenda as written is the agenda
5 that's required by regulation. As you will
6 see, it's got the Call to Order, Moment of
7 Silence, Determination of Quorum, and it has
8 Communications and accepts communications from
9 the Chair, from the Commissioners, and public
10 comments.

11 So there is a specific place for
12 public comments. What we do, however, as we
13 allow public comments, we've done that in the
14 past and it's worked well, to occur whenever
15 and after we've discussed an issue, so if
16 someone has a question.

17 Often people get a little concerned
18 that somehow they have to wait until that
19 specific point in the agenda to make the
20 public comments, so we will try to accommodate
21 public comments to the best of our ability
22 throughout the meeting.

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1 I think people get concerned that
2 an issue is discussed, and they have to wait
3 until an hour later to make comments. It
4 makes sense as it's structured, but we will
5 work with you, so please bear with us through
6 this meeting.

7 So one of the first things we'd
8 like to do is, of course, to make a formal
9 determination that we have a quorum,
10 Marceline.

11 MS. ALEXANDER: Good morning,
12 everyone. As your name is called,
13 Commissioners, please indicate whether or not
14 you're present or not. Commissioner Allen?
15 Commissioner Allen is not here today.

16 Commissioner Baker? Commissioner
17 Baker called and said that he would be here,
18 he would be late.

19 Commissioner Carter? Commissioner
20 Carter also indicates that he'll be here in
21 ten minutes.

22 Commissioner Tapscott?

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1 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Present.

2 MS. ALEXANDER: Commissioner
3 Heinemann?

4 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: Present.

5 MS. ALEXANDER: Commissioner Pahwa?

6 COMMISSIONER PAHWA: Here.

7 MS. ALEXANDER: Commissioner
8 Travis?

9 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: Here.

10 MS. ALEXANDER: Interim Chair
11 Thompson?

12 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Here.

13 MS. ALEXANDER: For purposes of
14 today's meeting, Full Commission Meeting, I
15 believe we have the necessary number of
16 members present to conduct the meeting in a
17 requisite quorum.

18 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you,
19 and we go through this exercise because to the
20 extent that we make decisions here where we
21 vote on items, we want to make sure that we
22 have the requisite number of commissioners

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1 here.

2 As you may know in the past, we do
3 hold meetings even when we do not have a
4 quorum, but we cannot make any decisions at
5 that meeting.

6 What I'd like to do, and I'm going
7 to go a little bit off the agenda because when
8 I have a quorum I like to get some of the
9 formal business taken care of as quickly as
10 possible.

11 There are items on our agenda that
12 require a vote, and I'd like to take care of
13 those at this point. One of those items
14 involves our minutes.

15 As you know, each meeting is
16 transcribed, and our secretary then summarizes
17 those in minutes that are presented to the
18 Commissioners for corrections, approval, and
19 essentially what we'd like to do is to ask the
20 Commissioners today if they are ready to vote
21 on - there are two sets of minutes that have
22 been out there, our December 2006 and our

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1 February 2007 minutes.

2 I'm aware that the Commissioners
3 only recently got the February 2007 minutes,
4 so it's okay if they are not ready to vote on
5 that, but I would like to get a vote or
6 corrections as to the December and the
7 February minutes, and actually I'm probably
8 taking over the attorney advisor's role here,
9 so you go ahead and take care of that.

10 MS. ALEXANDER: Do Commissioners
11 have questions related to the December 13,
12 2006, minutes?

13 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: No, but I
14 was a little confused on the way I received
15 mine this morning, and it said December the
16 13th, and then a correction, but the same
17 minutes showed up in February.

18 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: No, I'm
19 sorry for the confusion. The December minutes
20 you would have gotten a month ago. What
21 happened when the attorney was transcribing
22 the February minutes she erroneously left the

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1 heading December on it, so those are the
2 February minutes.

3 MS. ALEXANDER: And I sent a second
4 copy with the correction.

5 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: You may
6 not have gotten that.

7 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: I got it,
8 but I was on my way over here this morning
9 when I got it, so I haven't had a chance to
10 look at it, so I wasn't sure whether that
11 December date -

12 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: No, if you
13 haven't had a chance to read it, you can
14 always say you're not ready to approve the
15 February minutes.

16 Any other commissioners, any other
17 concerns?

18 MS. ALEXANDER: Do we need a motion
19 on the floor to approve the December 13th
20 minutes?

21 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: I make a

1 motion that the December meeting minutes be
2 approved.

3 COMMISSIONER PAHWA: I second it.

4 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Could we
5 get a yeas or nays? Could we get the yeas?

6 COMMISSIONER PAHWA: Yes.

7 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Any nays?

8 MS. ALEXANDER: The December 13,
9 2006, minutes are hereby approved. The
10 February 14, 2007 minutes as has been already
11 stated were disseminated via e-mail to the
12 Commissioners on yesterday. I would ask if
13 anyone wants to wait for those minutes to be
14 approved?

15 COMMISSIONER PAHWA: Yes, let's
16 wait until we finish reading.

17 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: I'll second
18 that if it's a motion.

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: All in
20 favor.

21 COMMISSIONER PAHWA: Yes.

22 MS. ALEXANDER: All those opposed.

1 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: So we will
2 - the February minutes we'll actually get a
3 chance to vote on those at our next meeting.

4 We do not - another area that we
5 normally would have votes on would be reports
6 from our Office of Taxicabs. These are when
7 the companies come in for approval, and
8 they're presented to the Commission.

9 We have a number of companies that
10 are coming up for approval. Normally we like
11 to get that information to the Commissioners
12 in advance of this meeting so that if they
13 have any questions, we can try to address
14 those, so we're going to not have that
15 presentation today.

16 Next meeting these companies will
17 be up for approval. If there's someone here
18 who was waiting for their company to come up
19 for approval today, it will take place at the
20 next Commission meeting.

21 I'd then quickly like to turn to
22 our reports from our panels. As you may be

1 aware, the Commission is divided into two
2 panels, the Panel on Rates and Rules and the
3 Panel on Consumer and Industry Concerns.
4 Those panels met last month, and the secretary
5 will summarize the issues that were addressed
6 by the panel and any issues that are coming up
7 for a vote by the Commission.

8 MS. ALEXANDER: The Panel on
9 Consumer Industry Concerns met on Wednesday,
10 February 21st. Interim Chairperson Thompson,
11 Commissioners Allen, Carter, Tapscott were
12 present.

13 One of the items on the agenda
14 concerned a request for the Commission's
15 position on advertising on receipts given to
16 passengers.

17 After a brief discussion, the panel
18 recommended that the full Commission not take
19 action on this issue.

20 The rationale from the panel was
21 that the interest of the Commission is better
22 focused on assuring that the receipts given to

1 passengers contain information that is
2 currently required within the District of
3 Columbia Municipal Regulations.

4 As everyone is aware, Title 31 of
5 the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations
6 require that receipts contain the operator's
7 name, identification card number, vehicle tag
8 number, time, date, place, and origin and
9 destination as well as the amount of fare on
10 the receipt.

11 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: So what
12 we're going to do at this point is the
13 Commission is going - the panel made a
14 recommendation to the Commission that it not
15 regulate the advertising on the receipts, that
16 in fact it focus on what's in the regulations,
17 currently in the regulations, in terms of
18 specific information that must appear on the
19 receipts.

20 Today the Commission will - this
21 was presented to the full Commission. Today
22 the Commission will vote on that issue, so

1 this issue is being presented to the
2 Commission for a vote.

3 The panel has recommended to the
4 Commission that it not take a position to
5 regulate the advertising on the receipts but
6 instead focus on what is required by
7 regulation, currently required by regulation,
8 to appear on the receipt.

9 Is there any discussion? Could I
10 get a motion to approve - I'm sorry. Could I
11 get a motion to approve the panel's
12 recommendation to the Commission?

13 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: I make a
14 motion to approve the panel's recommendation.

15 COMMISSIONER PAHWA: I second it.

16 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: All in
17 favor.

18 EVERYONE: Aye.

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Opposed.

20 MS. ALEXANDER: Hearing none, the
21 motion is approved.

22 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Please go

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1 ahead.

2 MS. ALEXANDER: Members of the
3 panel were informed by Interim Chairperson
4 Thompson that the licenses of taxicabs
5 advertising on the top exterior of vehicles
6 does not codify the most recent incidence of
7 the District of Columbia Department of
8 Consumer Regulatory Affairs Building Code.

9 I've been instructed to follow up
10 with DCRA's General Counsel and report out to
11 the panel when DCRA intends to update the
12 Building Code to include this information.

13 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Are you -
14 does everyone understand what this issue is?
15 The District of Columbia, we do authorize by
16 legislation the advertising that appears at
17 the top of the taxicabs.

18 What we have recently found out is
19 that this authorization which is supposed to
20 be in the Building Code, I mean that sounds a
21 little odd that that's where it appears, but
22 it's regulated by the Department of Consumer

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1 and Regulatory Affairs which they're the ones
2 who are the sort of proprietors of the
3 Building Code.

4 They in fact regulate the
5 advertising that appears on the Metro bus, and
6 so at some point this was given to them to, in
7 fact, implement.

8 What we found it was missing from
9 the Building Code, and so we do need to bring
10 that to their attention. I've seen a couple
11 of cabs around town with advertising at the
12 top, so I'm not sure where they've been
13 getting their authorization from, but we're
14 going to look into that, so if there are any
15 questions -

16 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: I have a
17 question. I understand what they do is
18 approve the advertisement that goes on that.
19 They don't approve - or we approve to allow
20 cabs to put that on the top. The thing to do
21 the advertisement or not to advertise.

22 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: What

1 occurred is the Council actually took that
2 away from the Commission. They authorize it
3 in legislation that, in fact, advertising on
4 the top of taxicabs is allowed in the District
5 of Columbia and to get a permit to place the
6 advertising and to do exactly what Mr.
7 Tapscott is saying to essentially go through
8 the approval process as to what you're placing
9 at the top, you go to DCRA, but the
10 authorization, the decision that advertising
11 on the exterior rooftop was done by the
12 District of Columbia City Council, so they're
13 a little bit higher authority than us.

14 Any other questions?

15 MR. BEASHA: May I direct to the
16 advertising on the receipts part. I have a
17 question there.

18 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Could you
19 please come forward? Yes.

20 MR. BEASHA: I have a question
21 about the advertising on the receipts.

22 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Could you

1 please state your name?

2 MR. BEASHA: My name is - sorry.

3 Yes, sure. Company also?

4 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Fine, yes.

5 MR. BEASHA: You just mentioned
6 that the panel recommended that the Commission
7 does not take any - or does not regulate the
8 advertising but rather focus on the content of
9 the receipt. Does that mean that still it's
10 allowed to advertise provided that the company
11 that's advertising and providing the receipts
12 would put all the necessary information on one
13 of the sides of the receipt?

14 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes.

15 MR. BEASHA: Is that correct?

16 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes.

17 MR. BEASHA: Okay, so I can
18 proceed?

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes.

20 MR. BEASHA: Fine, thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: I'm sorry,
22 what was your name again?

1 MR. BEASHA: Yanal, Yanal Beasha.
2 Company for Media B.

3 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: Oh, okay.

4 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Could I ask
5 him a question? You say your company is what?

6 MR. BEASHA: Media B. I just
7 started. I had this idea of advertising on
8 taxi receipts.

9 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: How do you
10 plan on distributing your receipts?

11 MR. BEASHA: Either by mailing the
12 taxicab receipt to the taxicab drivers or
13 distribute them on the streets for them at the
14 end of every month.

15 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Are you
16 selling them or are you -

17 MR. BEASHA: No, I'm not selling
18 them. I'm actually trying to get the money
19 for them.

20 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: You're
21 trying to get the money for them?

22 MR. BEASHA: Yes, they - buy the

1 receipt books that they have, so I'm thinking
2 that to either give it for free or as an
3 incentive if they want to go -

4 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Well,
5 that's what I'm concerned about the receipt
6 books that Title 31 calls for, cab drivers buy
7 those from the companies with no advertisement
8 on them. Any other receipts that advertise is
9 generally the hotels or something gives them
10 away free.

11 MR. BEASHA: I can give them -
12 depends on what your recommendations are. I
13 can either give them for free or if you allow
14 me to give incentive to the driver, I can give
15 them \$5.00, \$10.00 for a book as incentive for
16 them to use it, but it will contain all the
17 information necessary like date, place, the
18 taxicab number, the company, all that detail.
19 I'm here to say that I do not operate yet, so
20 any recommendations or rules that you have for
21 me, that would follow.

22 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Is that

1 it, Mr. Tapscott?

2 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: I'm going
3 to leave - I'm not really satisfied with it,
4 but I'll leave it.

5 MS. ALEXANDER: On Friday, March
6 15th, the Chairman and I will be attending a
7 meeting with the Office of Adjudication and
8 Hearings regarding the needs the hold periodic
9 meetings to clarify those areas where both the
10 D.C. Taxicab Commission and the Office of
11 Adjudications and Hearings have joint
12 authority.

13 It appears that there are some
14 areas where our authority overlaps, and we
15 just want to clarify what our duties and
16 responsibilities are.

17 The last issue raised before the -

18 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Question,
19 is anyone allowed to attend this or just -

20 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Anyone
21 meaning the public or the commissioners?

22 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT:

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1 Commissioners.

2 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Oh,
3 Commissioners are certainly welcome to attend.

4 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: All right,
5 and where is this going to be held at?

6 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: We'll get
7 you the specifics. Thank you.

8 MS. ALEXANDER: The last issue
9 raised before the panel concerned a complaint
10 that we received from Council Member Jack
11 Evans regarding the lack of cabs at Union
12 Station in late hours.

13 The Panel on Consumer and Industry
14 Concerns recommends as alternatives to
15 alleviate this problem that the Office of
16 Taxicabs send a letter to cab companies
17 alerting them of this issue and asking our
18 hack inspectors to distribute flyers on this
19 issue.

20 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: So that's
21 the end?

22 MS. ALEXANDER: That's the end of

1 the report on Consumer and Industry Concerns.
2 Any issues related to that?

3 The Panel on Rates and Rules met on
4 Wednesday, February 21st. Interim Chairperson
5 Thompson, Commissioners Pahwa and Travis were
6 present. Commissioner Heinemann participated
7 via conference call, and Commissioner
8 Tapscott, although a non-panel member, was
9 also present.

10 The first item on the panel
11 concerned the Department of Transportation's
12 new zone map. The panel raised a number of
13 concerns about the matter and concluded that
14 more work needed to be done with the map.

15 Interim Chairperson Thompson, with
16 the consent of the panel, has initiated
17 contact with the designer of the map to
18 communicate some of the concerns of the panel
19 and to determine whether these concerns can be
20 incorporated into the map.

21 Once this process is completed, the
22 panel will consider the map and make a

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1 recommendation to the full commission.

2 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Any
3 questions?

4 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: I would like
5 to - if we do have drivers here, since we had
6 concerns on that map, if we could spell out
7 what some of the concerns were that we had.

8 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, there
9 were essentially three concerns. Do you want
10 to spell them out, or I can?

11 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: No, you go
12 right ahead.

13 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: The map
14 that was presented from DDOT which is a very
15 attractive map. Most of you got a chance to
16 see it. One of the things it does, it does
17 orient the zones in terms of a true north-
18 south orientation, direction.

19 One of the concerns that the panel
20 had was that the street lines which appear in
21 white against the color background tend to pop
22 up, and there's the potential for someone to

1 look at it and actually confuse the street
2 markings with the zones, so one of the things
3 that we requested the designer to do was to do
4 what currently occurs with the map we have
5 which is it has heavy black lines around the
6 zone, and we asked her to recess the streets.

7 It's - you know, our current zone
8 map doesn't actually show, or it shows maybe
9 one or two streets. The map that DDOT's
10 recommending has a number of streets. You can
11 see that Connecticut Avenue runs straight
12 through the city north-south. Those kinds of
13 things, 16th Street, all those kind of major
14 arteries.

15 She's recessed those with dotted
16 lines, so that looks - it doesn't cause that
17 initial kind of confusion when you look at and
18 you're saying is that the zone or is that a
19 street line.

20 The third thing that the Commission
21 was concerned about was how to, in fact, blow
22 it up a little bit more so - remember it's

1 going to be sitting on the back of the
2 vehicle, and the passenger has to see it, so
3 that's - those are the three concerns.

4 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: Well we had
5 another concern. That was that we wanted to
6 make sure that it's not considered a tourist
7 map versus an industry map.

8 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: I think in
9 essence those three concerns in doing so take
10 it out of that realm. It's going to be
11 something that would be very clear in terms of
12 what we're requiring in our regulation to do
13 which is to clearly show the zones when the
14 person gets in the cab that they want to show
15 the zones

16 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: And more
17 specific landmarks throughout the city versus
18 most of those that sell in the mall and
19 Georgetown area.

20 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes,
21 that's another concern. Thank you.

22 MS. ALEXANDER: The next item

1 before the panel concerns how the D.C. Taxicab
2 Commission could facilitate the use of taxis
3 by disabled or handicapped passengers using
4 motorized wheelchairs by issuing a special
5 identification to those passengers which would
6 authorize them to access Maryland and Virginia
7 taxicabs.

8 Presently those persons, the
9 process is that those persons desiring that
10 service have to contact the Office of Taxicabs
11 which arrange for the service and issues a
12 special letter of authorization to the taxicab
13 companies.

14 The panel recommended that the
15 matter go before the full commission for a
16 vote on whether the D.C. Taxicab Commission
17 should authorize the issuance of this special
18 identification that requires persons with
19 disabilities to register with the D.C. Taxicab
20 Commission to get an identification issued in
21 turn by the Commission.

22 The feeling is that this would

1 allow them to get out-of-state handicapped
2 assessed for vehicles without having to notify
3 the Office of Taxicabs in advance.

4 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: At this
5 point we're going to seek a vote from the
6 Commission as to that authorization.

7 Is there any discussion?

8 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: No, I
9 think my question is why do we have to require
10 handicapped people to get an additional piece
11 of identification. There's got to be an
12 easier way to handle that, to have them, I
13 don't know what the handicap population is or
14 the tourists or whoever want to use it, a
15 taxicab could give them an ID card so they can
16 get can get an out-of-state cab. There's got
17 to be an easier way.

18 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Any
19 suggestions? What we currently have that the
20 industry complains about is the process they -
21 we're now requiring is that the person has to
22 contact us, Office of Taxicabs. The Office of

1 Taxicabs arranges for the service, gets a
2 letter to the taxi company to authorize them
3 so in case they're stopped by the police or
4 anyone sees them picking up a passenger in the
5 District, they will have something to show
6 that they have authorization from us.

7 Where that falls apart is, of
8 course, if you need immediate service,
9 assuming that can be arranged that way
10 quickly, or on the weekends or holidays or
11 late at night when this office is closed, so
12 that's the complaint.

13 We're trying to find a mechanism,
14 and that's what this discussion is about.

15 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: Where it
16 also would fall apart is if you have a
17 convention of let's say disabled war veterans
18 that are here for four days, you know, we
19 should survey what kind of identification they
20 already have and see if any of those are
21 acceptable.

22 I mean, do they have a special

1 designation on their driver's license or any
2 of these other things?

3 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Oh, I see
4 what you're getting - yes. The - if you don't
5 mind, the thought is, and I don't know that
6 this was necessarily presumed that they would
7 get a different identification. It may very
8 well be that something they already have could
9 be used.

10 I mean I believe there is something
11 that they possibly already have that would -
12 the suggestion is not to go create a new -
13 it's to use whatever we can to facilitate
14 that, okay. Mr. Tapscott.

15 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes, in
16 doing that, I'm definitely for the handicapped
17 people and all, but when years ago before
18 these new wheelchairs came out, there is a law
19 in Title 31 that we drivers do have to handle
20 the fold-up wheelchair, and we do handle that.

21 The difference is these motorized
22 wheelchairs, some of them are very heavy, and

1 what are we going to do this for is the fare.
2 If we authorize out-of-state companies to come
3 in here and pick these people, what fare are
4 they going to be allowed to charge?

5 Are they going all of them at the
6 same 650 rate or are they going to be able to
7 do like the WACT vans, charge \$65.00 and
8 \$70.00, so we've got to be careful as far as
9 the rate is concerned as far as I'm concerned,
10 and we also don't need to mislead the public
11 that a driver is going to be able to handle a
12 motorized chair because most cabs in the City
13 is not equipped for that, and we are not
14 equipped as far as insurance companies to
15 handle these motorized chairs because the
16 driver, the way I understand the insurance
17 policy is, we're not supposed to put our hands
18 on the passenger.

19 So a passenger gets hurt, what
20 happens to that passenger?

21 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: A point of
22 clarification, Mr. Tapscott. The discussion

1 is actually about the motorized wheelchairs.

2 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: That's
3 right, that's what I'm saying.

4 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, not
5 the fold-up wheelchairs.

6 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: We do take
7 those. There's no problem with those.

8 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, the
9 point is at this point we're not giving
10 services to people with motorized wheelchairs.
11 We're not providing services to people with
12 motorized wheelchairs.

13 What we're trying to do through
14 this identification process is to not say to
15 people in the handicapped community too bad
16 for you.

17 The long-term plan is certainly to
18 try to get services to people in the District
19 who are handicapped regardless of whether they
20 have collapsible or motorized, but at this
21 point on this date at this time, we're not
22 providing that service, and so what is before

1 the Commission is the handicapped community
2 coming out in wheelchairs.

3 I actually went to a couple of the
4 community hearings, came out in wheelchairs
5 and said is there some way you just make it a
6 little easier for us, and so this is actually
7 the discussion.

8 Any way the Commission can
9 essentially do whatever we can do to provide
10 services to those people, if I - I'll tell you
11 a story that happened, and granted this may
12 not fit the story, and this is a very pleasant
13 gentleman who got in his motorized wheelchair
14 and was down on the Mall. The chair broke
15 down.

16 They called the police, the police
17 said I don't carry. The police call the fire
18 department. The fire department says I can
19 only take you to the hospital. They took the
20 poor man to Howard Hospital. Howard says
21 you're not sick. We can't do anything for
22 you.

1 It's a horrible story, and thank
2 goodness apparently a taxi driver, and he's
3 very complimentary of this taxi driver who
4 showed up and got him home.

5 So all we're talking about today is
6 what can we do while we are trying to get
7 handicap-accessible vehicles in the District.
8 What can we do at this point to facilitate
9 this? I think that's the only issue we have
10 today.

11 We know all the issues about the -
12 regular cabs cannot do the - someone has a
13 question, sorry. Yes, please and identify
14 yourself.

15 MR. SMITH: I'm Darrell Smith.

16 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: And also,
17 Mr. Smith, if you don't mind writing your name
18 there. Thank you.

19 MR. SMITH: I think it's wrong to
20 invite somebody into the District to do my
21 business because -

22 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: One

1 second, one second. Go ahead.

2 MR. SMITH: When we pay our license
3 and pay our certificate from all the fees we
4 pay for this business, it's wrong to invite
5 somebody that hadn't paid the legal fees that
6 we pay, they could pay for the business
7 license to do business in the town. It's
8 illegal, and I think it's wrong. That's why
9 we're here. That's what we get paid for.

10 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Now what
11 do you suggest? What would you suggest for
12 these people without collapsible - the
13 motorized wheelchair? What would you suggest?

14 MR. SMITH: Five years ago, 2002,
15 he told me I can't and a lot of people - I
16 went to buy a brand new van for - to pick the
17 handicapped, specifically to pick up handicap,
18 and it was awful, I couldn't do it. I had the
19 money for it, I had the banks ready for it,
20 brand new one. They said I couldn't do it.

21 I would even talk to the
22 Commissioner. I begged him. He said we can't

1 do it, so I - Now you tell me you can do it
2 now.

3 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: You could
4 not -

5 MR. SMITH: I could not -

6 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: You
7 couldn't operate a taxicab .

8 MR. SMITH: In 2002 I couldn't have
9 a van as a tax, and I was going to use that to
10 pick up the handicapped.

11 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes.

12 MR. SMITH: But I couldn't do it.
13 I even talked to him about it, he said I
14 couldn't do it. I talked to the Chairman
15 about it. I couldn't do it.

16 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: And the
17 reason they - that was given at the time.

18 MR. SMITH: They said there was
19 people on the Commission that didn't want it,
20 and I was ahead of the curve because I knew
21 this was the future, sort of like the paralift
22 system and things of that nature, and I

1 couldn't do it. Now you're telling me that we
2 don't have resources because, you know, it was
3 a stonewall on the cab driver. A lot of cab
4 drivers try to get vans. Had vans all in
5 Virginia, vans in Maryland.

6 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: But I was
7 under the impression, and I could be wrong and
8 maybe I wasn't on the Commission at the time
9 that - because I've heard issues come up that
10 the van drivers were concerned that they
11 wanted to be able to charge a rate that's
12 higher than the taxicab rate. Was that your
13 thinking at the time?

14 MR. SMITH: Well, you know, when
15 you got assess for - you have to charge a
16 different fee, especially, it has to be
17 somewhat different there, and maybe the City
18 could subsidize, subsidize, the balance.

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: I'm sorry,
20 your name again.

21 MR. SMITH: Darrell Smith.

22 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Mr. Smith,

1 one of the things, and I'm jumping a little
2 bit ahead is this issue is an issue that's
3 coming up at every single meeting, and it's
4 time for us to address this, and one of the -
5 I'm jumping a little ahead just because you're
6 here and I see some hands up that I know want
7 to talk about this issue, one of the
8 recommendations also out of this panel is that
9 we need to put together an industry group, an
10 advocate group, and get this issue resolved
11 one way or the other.

12 If it cannot work here because it
13 needs to be subsidized, then that
14 recommendation needs to formally go up to the
15 people who do the subsidies, the City Council,
16 the, you know, people above us, the
17 Commission.

18 So we are looking into this issue,
19 so thank you so much for raising it.

20 Mr. Bethea, I see your name up, and
21 Carolyn, I see you name up also. I know Mr.
22 Bethea wants to make a specific presentation,

1 and I'd like to hold that for a minute.

2 Carolyn, if yours is just a
3 question on this issue, that's fine.

4 MS. ROBINSON: My name is Carolyn
5 Robinson. I drive Yellow Cab 800. I wanted
6 to say two things. One, I thought that most
7 of the handicap, a lot of them who have
8 Medicare, use Metro Access, and I also want to
9 bring, there was at one time a company they
10 were trying to start that was wheelchair
11 accessible, but they only had six vehicles,
12 and you're supposed to have 20 vehicles for a
13 fleet of cabs.

14 Apparently something happened, and
15 the company was resolved, but they never could
16 get 20 vehicles, and I don't know whether the
17 Commission was given them special permission
18 for just the six vehicle or what happened.

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, I'm
20 aware, at least I've certainly heard about it.
21 Mr. Tapscott can speak in actuality that the
22 company was authorized, and the company went

1 bankrupt, so that's essentially what became of
2 that. Mr. Tapscott.

3 COMMISSION TAPSCOTT: Well that's
4 partly true. We authorized six cabs for the
5 wheelchair, and at the time the gentleman was
6 allowed to put the six cabs on illegal, not
7 illegal, but without the consent of the full
8 Commission I guess because you're supposed to
9 have 20 cabs.

10 The man was allowed to put on six.
11 He did not go bankruptcy, he went out of
12 business because there was not enough business
13 to keep his cabs on the street.

14 Number one, no company hires any
15 cab drivers, so they didn't put a company out
16 here. They have no drivers unless some driver
17 wants to rent that cab from him, the cab is
18 going to sit dead because the companies cannot
19 authorize or make a driver drive a wheelchair
20 cab.

21 It also has been all the time is
22 the fare. You've got WMAT busses out here

1 like Ms. Robinson said, and Metro who charges
2 a different rate for these.

3 Now these wheelchairs can be
4 carried by WMATC, and they are authorized to
5 charge a fare, but as long as we have a fare
6 of 650, it's going to hard to get around.

7 And to clarify what this gentleman,
8 yes, he talked to me, but he was not talking
9 about wheelchairs at that time. What he was
10 wondering was what's on a van or an SUV, and
11 at that time the Commissioner was not allowing
12 no vans and no SUVs, but since then they have
13 authorized vans and some SUVs, so it was not
14 about the wheelchair so much. It was plainly
15 vans.

16 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, and
17 I would like to - if this is - I'd like to
18 keep the subject matter - I recognize that
19 we're talking several - about handicapped
20 services, but the question about authorizing
21 some process to allow these people - we
22 already have a process. We already have a

1 process, Mr. Brodis, we already have a
2 process, okay.

3 I don't know how this process came
4 into being, but there is currently a process
5 where if I have a motorized wheelchair and I
6 need taxi service, I call the Office of
7 Taxicabs. They make the arrangement with the
8 Virginia or Maryland taxicab, send a letter to
9 that company authorizing them to provide that
10 service to that individual on that date at
11 that time to whatever the destination is.

12 What these people are saying is is
13 there some mechanism that you can provide
14 while we are debating or attempting to fix
15 this issue or why the District does not have
16 handicap-accessible taxicabs in the fleets we
17 have here that will allow these people to, in
18 fact, have access to taxicabs, like the
19 gentlemen that I just discussed, have access
20 to that kind of service that we, the able-
21 bodied people, have access to.

22 It's just a minor change as far as

1 I can see, and so that's what's before the
2 Commission.

3 MR. TAPSCOTT: May I say, I've been
4 on this Commission for seven years now, and no
5 where that I ever know that the Commission
6 took this position and voted on letting
7 Virginia or Maryland drivers. That was
8 something done purely by the Chairman and
9 never brought it to us. We've never voted on
10 it in any kind of way.

11 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: This is
12 now an opportunity to vote on it.

13 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: What are
14 we voting on? I'm trying to ask what are we
15 voting on?

16 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: We are
17 voting on a mechanism that will allow persons
18 with motorized wheelchairs to access taxicab
19 services that are not provided by D.C.
20 licensed taxicab companies. As Mr. Tapscott's
21 pointing out and those who have been on the
22 Commission for awhile, the Commission is

1 currently - in fact, last year as I reported
2 at the oversight hearing I think we did
3 something like 22 authorizations or something
4 on that order where the calls come into the
5 office. The person with the motorized
6 wheelchair calls in and requests service. I
7 need to get to this destination by - on this
8 date.

9 The office arranges for the service
10 with the Maryland or Virginia taxicab,
11 provides a letter authorizing that limited
12 service, and that is how these people have
13 been accessing service and what we're voting
14 on today is whether we can expedite the
15 service we're providing internally at this
16 point because those persons recognize - those
17 who attended one of the hearing, I think it
18 was in Ward 1 - Ward 1 and 2, the people
19 showed up and said but we can't get the
20 service when you're closed after 4:30, and we
21 can't get the service on the weekends, and we
22 can't get the service on the holidays, so is

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1 there some mechanism you can come up with.

2 One suggestion was possibly some
3 identification for the handicapped person with
4 the motorized wheelchair, and as you
5 mentioned, Commission Heinemann, not
6 necessarily that we have to create a new
7 identification. The person may already have
8 something, and we'll look into that.

9 We're not necessarily at this point
10 talking about what the identification will be,
11 and how in essence, it may that the people
12 have to register with us in some kind of way.

13 All we're doing today is just
14 saying we are sensitive to those persons'
15 needs. We're also sensitive to the fact that
16 drivers who are licensed in the District are
17 saying yes, that's a business that should
18 rightfully be provided by us, but the truth is
19 we're not providing it currently.

20 So that's all that's before the
21 Commission today.

22 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: But it

1 doesn't sound like this is an action item.
2 This sounds like - my recommendation would be
3 to have the Commission recommend to the
4 chairperson to develop a proposal on a
5 solution.

6 I mean voting on a sense that you
7 guys - that we as a Commission need to address
8 it. It's not an action item. I mean there's
9 not a concrete proposal in front of us. The
10 proposal would be to say that if so and so has
11 x amount of identification, then they can go
12 and do x and x, passed, but you're just saying
13 we should vote on a motion that would
14 authorize you to come up with a proposal, but
15 I think you can do that already. I'm
16 confused.

17 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Anyone
18 else? If you don't mind, sir, on the
19 handicap-accessible, if you want to speak on
20 that generally. It's going to come up again.
21 It's going to come up on the agenda again.
22 It's going to come up on the agenda, if you

1 don't mind. Mrs. Travis.

2 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: I just want
3 to say that I don't know when it was
4 established, but I had a friend who for years,
5 and I've known her over 20 years, has used
6 Barwood because they go out - they would go
7 out every Thursday to dinner, and Barwood
8 would come and she's basically bedridden
9 except that she could go out once a week to
10 dinner, and Barwood would come in, and she had
11 registered with the Commission, and Barwood
12 would check with the Commission to make sure
13 her name was there, that she was disabled, and
14 they were able to make the arrangements
15 themselves, but Barwood made sure that her
16 name was sent out to Barwood.

17 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: So what
18 I'm hearing, Mrs. Travis, is that at some
19 point in the past there was also another
20 mechanism where the handicapped person just
21 registered with the Commission, and in essence
22 that became the authorization, so that's

1 another option.

2 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: Right, right.

3 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: What this
4 was is - was a recommendation from the panel
5 to the Commission. Is there a sense that the
6 Commission wants to authorize the Chair to, in
7 fact, investigate what might be the most easy
8 - an easier mechanism. That's another way to
9 approach it.

10 It's up to the Commission as to
11 what it wants to do. I'm placing that - is
12 there a sense from the Commission that they
13 want to authorize the Chair to investigate a
14 mechanism for providing a service? I'm sorry.

15 COMMISSIONER BAKER: I would move
16 they sense of the Commission that it would -
17 that it does want to facilitate the transport
18 of handicapped persons and is requesting of
19 the Chair a plan that would facilitate that.

20 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Any
21 second?

22 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: I second

1 that.

2 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: All in
3 favor.

4 EVERYONE: Aye.

5 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: What is the
6 motion? I'm not sure.

7 COMMISSIONER BAKER: It's a sense
8 of the Commission and a request of the Chair
9 to bring back to the Commission a plan that
10 would facilitate the transport of handicapped
11 persons via taxicab service.

12 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Anyone
13 other? We're finished with that, and that's
14 the conclusion.

15 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: I would just
16 like to make a statement that we're not
17 saying, Commissioner Travis, that we're not
18 saying that we need to provide that - services
19 for people with disabilities from the District
20 point of view to our drivers, but in the
21 meanwhile there are people who do need to get
22 around who are in motorized wheelchairs, and

1 so we have to do expedient things, and that is
2 to make sure that they can get where they want
3 to go anytime that they can as any other
4 citizen.

5 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you
6 so very much. That concludes the items that
7 the Commission needed to vote on at this
8 meeting, so I'm sorry that I moved the agenda
9 around a little bit, and we do have people
10 here who need to make some presentations.

11 I want to make a couple of quick
12 announcements. We have our budget hearing
13 coming up on April 25th. I just got notice
14 yesterday, April 25th, Room 412, from 10:00
15 a.m. to noon, and as you know from the last
16 oversight hearing, that can change, the time
17 will likely change.

18 We just had oversight hearings on
19 March 5th, and we'll now have the budget
20 hearings. The budget focuses, of course, on
21 your expenditures, specifically, yes, yes.

22 I also would just like for the

1 record -any questions? Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Will we,
3 the Commissioners, have any input or any -
4 into the budget or is it already made up?

5 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: The budget
6 hearing on April 25th -

7 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Just before
8 the hearing, that's what I'm saying.

9 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: The budget
10 hearing on April 25th is actually your what are
11 you doing with your 2007 budget, so that's
12 already done. You know, we operate on fiscal
13 years, so what is occurring is the Commission
14 in this year will get a chance to have input
15 on your FY 2008 and some aspects of your FY
16 2009 budget in this year, this calendar year.

17 It's always a little bit ahead of
18 us, so the input on the 2007 occurred - would
19 have occurred last year.

20 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: So this is
21 --

22 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: It's at

1 the Council.

2 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: On the
3 budget for 2008 and 2009.

4 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: No, no.

5 COMMISSIONER BAKER: What was that
6 date?

7 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: I'm going
8 to get the specifics.

9 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: Wait a
10 minute, it is on the 2008 budget, correct or
11 is the 2009?

12 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: I'm trying
13 to figure out -

14 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: The budget
15 hearing is for 2008. You just had your
16 oversight hearing for 2007.

17 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: No, no.
18 The oversight hearing is on your activities
19 for fiscal year 2006, six. All the questions
20 presented by the Council member were on your
21 activities in fiscal year 2006.

22 Fiscal year 2007, and I understand

1 the confusion is right now. It started October
2 1, and the reason for the confusion is the
3 fiscal year starts - it's called `07 but it
4 actually started in calendar year `06, October
5 1, so it runs October 1, 1006, this is fiscal
6 year 2007, October 1, 2006, to September 30th,
7 2007.

8 What Mr. Graham, Council Member
9 Graham, had on March 5th was your oversight
10 hearings. What were your activities? How did
11 you meet your mandates?

12 He was not asking budget questions.
13 He wasn't asking how did you spend your
14 money. This budget hearing now focuses on -
15 he'll be asking how did you spend your money
16 in 2006? How are you spending your money in
17 2007, and what plans do you have in terms of
18 your budget for 2008?

19 COMMISSIONER BAKER: But I think
20 the question that Mr. Tapscott was asking is
21 the Mayor is preparing to put in the 2008
22 budget to the Council which will be part of

1 that hearing. We've not seen the budget, and
2 so I think will we have an opportunity to see
3 the budget or be briefed on it before the
4 hearing?

5 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, you
6 will be briefed on it, but in terms -
7 remember, that budget was already put in.
8 This is what I'm trying to say.

9 By the time we have a hearing, my
10 predecessor would have created the budget -

11 COMMISSIONER HEINEMANN: The 2008
12 budget -

13 COMMISSIONER BAKER: We understand
14 that, but the Mayor hasn't submitted it to the
15 Council yet at all.

16 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: And as I
17 indicated we will certainly share with you the
18 documents. We certainly will share with you
19 the documents. I was only responding to the
20 point about the input part because it got
21 created already. That's all I was saying.

22 One last announcement would be as

1 you are aware, we had the Taxicab Appreciation
2 Day. Hopefully we got the information out.
3 The Hospitality Alliance. We could only get
4 it out as fast as we got it, but we got it out
5 as quickly as we could.

6 We put it on our website, and we
7 did everything we could do. They actually
8 took on the advertisement, and so we hope that
9 when they're doing it annually we will now be
10 able to let you know in advance, and what
11 occurred was Council Member Schwartz issued a
12 resolution, and it was signed by Council
13 Member Vincent Gray, and essentially - pardon
14 me.

15 (Off microphone comments)

16 I don't happen to have the date
17 here with me today, but it was in February,
18 and for those who are aware of it, the hotels
19 had coffee and sweets and whatnot they gave to
20 the taxi drivers.

21 Also for those who - February 20th,
22 we have - they left a lot of the receipts

1 here, so there are stacks of receipts out
2 there. You're welcome to take as many as - I
3 know that may not help your business so to
4 speak, but there's stacks of receipts out
5 there for free.

6 I just want to make that
7 announcement, and what I would like to do now
8 is to go back to our - the other items on our
9 agenda which was comments by Commissioner
10 Tapscott and a comment by Commissioner Travis.
11 Mr. Tapscott.

12 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes, my
13 comment is on the - we spend a lot of time and
14 there was supposed to be a committee set up on
15 looking at the possibility of putting hack's
16 thing into different places, and all of a
17 sudden it fell through as far as I know.
18 Nothing is being done on it.

19 I also had before we were to look
20 into the one-way streets in mornings and
21 evenings where you're not supposed to enter.
22 Cab drivers have gotten tickets for going in

1 there to pick up someone doing those hours,
2 and most of these do not enter streets
3 around, just like to see if we can't amend
4 what DDOT to have these streets where a cab
5 driver can go in there without getting a
6 ticket.

7 We talked about that now for a year
8 or more, and nothing has been done on it, so
9 I'd like to see those items get back in the
10 system and pushed because I understand that at
11 one time there was talk about putting a taxi
12 stand in nighttime up on Columbia Road
13 somewhere or something, and the ball park
14 stand was also in controversy, and we've never
15 got a clear up-to-date on what is happening
16 there.

17 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Back I
18 think it was a number of meetings, I guess
19 probably July because I did excerpt this from
20 meetings.

21 We had someone from DDOT who came,
22 Mr. Safu, actually was his name, and he came

1 and spoke about the taxi stand at RFK
2 specifically, and a number of of taxi drivers
3 who were in the audience, in fact, I remember,
4 I'm sorry, your name, Mr. -

5 MR. BUGGS: Buggs.

6 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Mr. Buggs
7 raised a number of issues about these one-way
8 signs, busses only, and how in essence if
9 we're looking at transportation in its
10 entirety, taxi cab drivers should be allowed,
11 shouldn't have these restrictions bus only
12 lane. We should in fact allow taxi drivers to
13 use those.

14 This is what Mr. Tapscott is
15 referring to, so what I would - Mr. Tapscott,
16 I'm going to add to this recommendation is
17 that this issue - I remember the previous
18 chairperson said he would put together a task
19 force and what I would recommend is at the
20 meeting of a panel industry, of consumer and
21 industry affairs, that in fact we invite a
22 number of these drivers who are identified.

1 I think Mr. - I'm sorry, another B.
2 There's Bethea, Mr. Buggs, and Mr. - with a B
3 in the back, Brodis, also mentioned some
4 issues that in essence we somehow let you know
5 when the panel meets, and you can come and we
6 can somehow begin to move this along.

7 I brought all of Mr. Safu's follow-
8 up issues back to his attention and sent them
9 off to - back to his agency and back to his
10 superiors, all the issues that we needed to
11 have addressed, and probably also have them
12 also appear at the panel meeting.

13 I would like not to keep having all
14 these task forces that in essence if we could,
15 in fact, just use the panels that we have and
16 bring the issue to the panel meetings and
17 bring the persons and their recommendations
18 and then after that come out with specific
19 recommendations as to what can or can't be
20 done in terms of having DDOT as our partner in
21 moving ahead on these issues, so that's my
22 recommendation.

1 I see a couple of comments. I'm
2 sorry, Mr. Bethea had his hand up first.

3 MR. BETHEA: My name is Ronald
4 Bethea, an independent owner/operator of 252.
5 I would, on this area, like to have this group
6 whatever you're going to call yourselves, to
7 also deal with the issue of interstate fares.

8 I personally took a young lady to
9 Boston after 6:30 a.m. in the morning, and
10 I've been on the street for 38 years. I did
11 not know that all I-66 was HOV, not just the
12 HOV lane.

13 I dropped off at Immigration in
14 Boston. I took this fare from the bus station
15 in the morning. I'm required by law to
16 transport people regardless of where they were
17 going to go.

18 I took this young lady there and
19 dropped her off. I had to get gasoline.
20 There was a gas station near Boston right
21 before you hit the ramp to come back down on
22 I-66. There is no clear sign posted until you

1 get down on the ramp.

2 Once I got down on the ramp the
3 police officer pulled me over and gave me
4 \$145.00 ticket, so I want the Department of
5 Motor Vehicles and DDOT to be aware that once
6 a D.C. cab driver takes someone to Dulles
7 Airport and you're coming back, if you get off
8 to get gas and you try to get back on 66, if
9 you don't have two people in that vehicle, you
10 will be ticketed in Virginia because they're
11 telling you that the entire interstate inbound
12 in the morning between 6:30 and 9:30 is HOV,
13 not just the HOV lane but the entire highway.

14 That makes no sense to me
15 whatsoever, so I ended up paying \$110.00 for a
16 \$25.00 fare. That will not happen to me
17 again, but I think that this is the
18 information that all the drivers need to be
19 aware of, and I think that our legal
20 representative entity should send a letter to
21 the State of Virginia indicating that if a
22 driver has on his manifest that he is going to

1 Dulles Airport or going into Boston and has to
2 get back on because it's murder trying to use
3 50 and come through those roads to get back
4 into the District in the morning, 66 is the
5 only way you can make any time.

6 We should not be fined that type of
7 draconian money, and when I went in front of a
8 judge, she told me point blank this has been
9 out here 15 years, and you're supposed to know
10 the regulations in Virginia. Why do I have to
11 know what the regulation is about 66. I
12 wasn't on the HOV lane. I was just coming
13 down on the highway, so I'm saying I think
14 this is something that needs to be addressed.

15 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you
16 Mr. Bethea. We have a couple of avenues for
17 raising that. There's actually also a
18 Washington Regional Trans - Taxicab Transport
19 Administrators Group that meets, and there's
20 also something we - and it also has more WMAT
21 present as well, but that's a good point.

22 In essence you take the fare out,

1 and you're meeting the requirements, and
2 obviously you're not bringing the fare unless
3 you got a fare back or something. You're now
4 in the cab by yourself.

5 The regional transport - there is a
6 group at Cobb that has the taxicab
7 administrators throughout the region that
8 meets and tries to deal with issues that
9 across boundary similar kinds of issues, and
10 the meeting is tomorrow at - I'll have to get
11 that information. Yes, I'm sorry.

12 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Who set that
13 up or is it something that's sort of by the
14 region or just by the -

15 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: No, I
16 actually think what happened is it's been in
17 effect for some time and it was pretty much
18 informal.

19 Each region would host a meeting.
20 If you could imagine, if you were regulating
21 an industry, you're concerned about what else,
22 are you having the same issues or how have you

1 dealt with something in your jurisdiction?

2 So it appears just from minutes
3 that I've seen that it's been around awhile,
4 but what has been - what's become obvious is
5 that it needs to be more formalized and Cobb
6 has Council Government says it's willing to
7 step up because they also recognize that
8 transportation throughout the jurisdiction is
9 legitimately one of their mandates that they
10 need to look at that.

11 I'm going to, if you don't mind,
12 move to the next item. I'm sorry. There's
13 another point for public comment, but we do
14 have some public service.

15 PARTICIPANT: No, no, while we was
16 on this thing and I'll representative on this
17 particular Commission just spoke. I just wanted
18 to say one quick thing if I could. Okay,
19 between Mr. Pahwa and Mr. Tapscott, in the last
20 two weeks, I heard you yesterday on the radio
21 from two days gasoline has gone up 25 cents.

22 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Hold that

1 thought. I'd like to just stay on this issue
2 for a minute because we do have a point -

3 PARTICIPANT: I only said it
4 because our representative had misspoke.
5 That's all.

6 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay, Mr.
7 - the next item, one second, one second, let's
8 get - one second.

9 Ms. Travis, you want - you also
10 wanted to bring up the phone system.

11 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: Yes, I had
12 proposed a 24-hour information line, and I just
13 wanted to know where are we with that?

14 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Sometime
15 back I think in March, it's been quite some
16 time ago because I saw in the minutes, Mrs.
17 Travis proposed a series of movement of the
18 phone messages once they come in to this office
19 where, for example, if you were seeking
20 information on whether there is a snow
21 emergency or something, you would be able to
22 punch a button and get information on it.

1 One of the issues that this office
2 has been dealing with is we have a requirement,
3 for example, during the day. The phone must be
4 answered on three rings, so essentially that
5 service would only appear after the - after
6 hours.

7 There are some options that the
8 City is moving, Mrs. Travis, where they - first
9 of all, apparently those - moving those button
10 issues also requires you to have a certain
11 staffing level and also it's fairly expensive.

12 What we are looking into to address
13 these kind of concerns is the 727-1000 number
14 which is a 24-hour number, so - one second, one
15 second, Carolyn.

16 So, for example, with your snow
17 emergency, there's no one here to put on that
18 there is a snow emergency. There's no one in
19 the office, so we need to coordinate our
20 announcements with DPW, DDOT, and some
21 mechanism that can get the information out to
22 the public. I mean people get very frustrated.

1 You're calling here, no one's here, but the
2 staff wouldn't be here late at night, and the
3 staff - so we're talking about essentially this
4 is a 24/7 informational kind of office, and we
5 need to look to see how we can do it. So, yes,
6 I think there was some work done initially.
7 One second, one second.

8 There was some work done, but in
9 essence we're picking up on that at this point.

10 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: A lot of the
11 kind of things I went on there, was, for
12 instance, people could call and find out what
13 are the zone rates. They could also call how
14 to file a complaint.

15 They could also call, they could
16 call to find out when our other public
17 hearings, what's on the - coming up. When does
18 the Commission meet? When will the next test
19 be done, so there are a lot of things different
20 from what they would be getting from 727,
21 suggestions from the public as to how to
22 improve services, suggestions from the drivers

1 as to how to improve the industry.

2 Those were the kind of things that
3 I had proposed.

4 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Pretty
5 much all I can say in response to those
6 recommendations that Ms. Travis is that we've
7 started looking into what kind of service would
8 you have in capability to provide someone the
9 ability to move through a series of buttons.

10 As I said, we already are working
11 with an administration that is saying we don't
12 want people on these buttons. You know when
13 you call somewhere, right, and it goes in and
14 it tells you go to this for this, and go to
15 that for that. Then you get another recording
16 telling you to go to something, and then
17 someone's got to come and take that out.

18 You know the frustration. We all
19 experience it every day. The District
20 Government is saying we - this is the
21 Administration, we want a live body answering
22 the phones. Every representative in this room

1 who is from an agency knows we're being
2 evaluated against whether that phone is picked
3 up on three rings.

4 I pretty much have it out there
5 where it's like I don't care who you are. The
6 phone rings three times, you've got to pick up
7 that phone because in essence we're going to be
8 evaluated down.

9 Mrs. Travis' suggestions are
10 legitimate suggestions. We've place
11 information, for example, on the website,
12 everybody doesn't have a computer, and
13 everybody's not going on. We're doing
14 frequently-asked questions. We've got to come
15 up with some mechanism. It may not be that we
16 can have 15 buttons, press this for this
17 information, but this point she's raising is
18 legitimate. We've got to figure a way to get
19 information to people off hours or just in
20 general, so we're looking into it. That what I
21 can, Mrs. Travis.

22 It's not - the recommendation was

1 made in March. I don't think enough follow up
2 was done. It's been some time since you made
3 that recommendation. We're looking into it.

4 We had a meeting on the 7th with our
5 customer service people from the Mayor's
6 office, and one of the recommendations were
7 that, for example, the 727-1000 which is now
8 going to be a 24/7 operation is the number that
9 the administration would recommend that we have
10 people call to determine whether there's a snow
11 emergency because they're going to be there all
12 the time.

13 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: Well, I
14 understand that. That wasn't even on my
15 proposal because I know that that's -

16 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: That's a
17 special issue.

18 COMMISSIONER TRAVIS: Exactly, yes,
19 right. That wasn't on there.

20 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: But we
21 will look into whatever is available. We will
22 come back to you with some - share with you the

1 dollars. We also have some incredible quotes
2 if you go for these service, so we'll bring
3 everything back to you, but we are looking into
4 it. Thank you.

5 (Off the record comments)

6 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, the
7 regional meeting is at two o'clock over at Carr
8 which is on North Capitol.

9 PARTICIPANT: They used to have it
10 from 12 to two because you had lunch. I don't
11 know.

12 PARTICIPANT: That's what I have,
13 but I can double check.

14 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Let's
15 check, let's check because it's normally 12:30
16 to two o'clock, excuse me 12:30 to two o'clock.

17 Okay, and when you come in just ask
18 the guard and the Regional Taxicab Transport
19 Meeting, and the public is allowed to attend
20 the meeting. Twelve-thirty, I'm pretty sure
21 it's 12:30. It's usually 12:30.

22 We have a number of presenters that

1 I'd like to get to at this point because
2 they've waiting awhile, and I know some of whom
3 you really want to hear from, you're dying to
4 hear from probably.

5 The first - we'd like to hear from
6 our Commissioner of Insurance. Tom, if you'd
7 like, there are some other people who have
8 shorter presentations, maybe that might make
9 sense.

10 Yes, Mr. Eure, yes, because he's
11 usually here a long time.

12 MR. EURE: Okay, my name is Philip
13 Eure. I'm the Executive Director of the City's
14 Office of Police Complaints. Good morning.

15 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: No, I'm
16 sorry, on the side chair, or does it -

17 MR. EURE: Yes, I don't mind if I'm
18 standing or sitting. I just want to make sure
19 that I can address everyone.

20 Thank you for inviting me back
21 here. My name is Philip Eure, E-U-R-E. I'm
22 from the City's Office of Police Complaints

1 which is an agency independent of the
2 Metropolitan Police Department, and we handle
3 complaints from citizens. Taxicab drivers are
4 citizens, regarding interactions with police
5 officers, and I appreciate being invited back.

6 I spoke to this body, several
7 commissioners last year, at 14, exactly, and
8 some of you were there, and I remember you were
9 there, Mr. Tapscott, and there were drivers
10 there, but we appreciate coming out to these
11 forums just to let folks know about what we do,
12 and I know there's a busy agenda here, so I'm
13 not going to take up a lot of your time, and I
14 have some brochures here which explain our
15 agency.

16 I'll be sure to - in fact I'll just
17 pass them out as I'm speaking right here, and I
18 have some extras in case we need any.

19 Yes, we're located at 14th and I
20 Street in Northwest, and the reason why I
21 specifically wanted to come out to this forum
22 is because we do get a lot of complaints from

1 taxicab drivers involving their interactions
2 with police officers.

3 Some of you perhaps have used our
4 processes before. Very generally what we do is
5 we receive complaints from citizens including
6 taxicab drivers, and we also adjudicate these
7 complaints, and we also have a separate
8 mediation program.

9 The types of complaints that can be
10 filed with our office fall into six basic
11 areas. They involve harassments, use of
12 excessive or unnecessary force, use of language
13 or conduct that's insulting or humiliating,
14 discriminatory treatment is the fourth
15 category. The fifth category is retaliation
16 for filing a complaint with our agency, and the
17 final category which was added in by the
18 District Council a couple of years ago is
19 failure to wear or display required
20 identification or identify one's self by name
21 and badge number when requested to do so by a
22 member of the public. We're talking about

1 police officers who fail to identify
2 themselves.

3 The agency opened up in 2001, about
4 six years ago. There was a predecessor
5 civilian complaint review board that was
6 disbanded by the Council in 1995. Some of you
7 may be familiar with it. This is a whole new
8 ball game here. We've got an investigative
9 staff.

10 We independently investigate these
11 complaints, and we make determinations and
12 because we're independent of the police
13 department, we go to where the evidence leads
14 us, and the types of issues that frequently
15 come up involving taxicab drivers are manifest
16 issues and insurance issues.

17 Some drivers claim that they are
18 sometimes frequently stopped by police officers
19 who are asking them to produce the manifest,
20 and there are issues related to that, and we'll
21 only take the case or pursue the case if there
22 seems to be elements of harassment in those

1 interactions.

2 The insurance issue that arises,
3 and we still have some lack of clarity on our
4 end. The insurance issue that arises is what
5 sorts of documentation is the driver required
6 to carry with him, and when an officer comes by
7 and asks to see proof of insurance, my
8 understanding is that drivers typically have
9 some sort of receipt issued by their taxicab
10 company showing that they have insurance, and
11 the police officers in those situations ask for
12 further proof or the actual cards.

13 This is an issue that comes up
14 repeatedly, and maybe I can get some
15 clarification from you all as to what the
16 actual rule is.

17 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: This is
18 actually your segue into a little bit of Tom's
19 presentation saying you've got to get us
20 clarification.

21 MR. EURE: The point of my
22 presentation is really just to make folks aware

1 of what we do. We're an honest brokerage
2 trying to resolve these complaints, and we
3 refer several of them, as I said, to mediation
4 where we think that it's good to bring the
5 complainants and the police officer together in
6 a room and try to work out a solution.

7 We also have sort of a separate
8 authority to issue so-called policy
9 recommendations to the Chief of Police of the
10 Metropolitan Police Department, City Council,
11 and the Mayor and so that if there are issues
12 involving taxicab drivers or changes in the law
13 that some of you taxicab drivers,
14 commissioners, are interested in, let us know.
15 We have developed a number of proposal for
16 reform over the years that have been welcomed,
17 embraced, by MPD and the City Council and the
18 Mayor, and we want to - ultimately our goal is
19 to reduce the number of complaints filed by
20 taxicab drivers against police officers to
21 improve the interactions between citizens and
22 police officers, and so if we can help with

1 proposals we would like to do that.

2 I'm going to end my remarks here.
3 I don't know if there's time to take a couple
4 of questions.

5 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, yes,
6 a couple of questions. Just two, sorry.

7 PARTICIPANT: Is this Capitol
8 Police or -

9 MR. EURE: Yes, I should have said
10 it's just the Metropolitan Police Department,
11 so if you have complaints against Capitol
12 Police, Park Police, and so forth, you have to
13 file a complaint directly with those entities.
14 If you filed it with us, we'll forward it on to
15 them, but they have internal processes for
16 resolving complaints.

17 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Mr.
18 Lebet.

19 MR. LEBET: My question you have
20 strictly investigative and referral power. The
21 ultimate outcome of what happens either to the
22 complainant or the police officers either with

1 the superiors or the courts, is that correct?

2 MR. EURE: Not exactly. Without
3 going into all the details, the short answer to
4 you question is we have independent
5 investigation authority. We then make the
6 administrative process a determination as to
7 whether or not police misconduct occurred based
8 on the citizen's complaint, based on our
9 investigation.

10 If we say that police misconduct
11 occurred, the complaint is sustained. It's
12 then referred to the Metropolitan Police
13 Department where they must impose discipline.
14 Our decisions are binding on the police
15 department. It's an administrative process, so
16 it doesn't prevent someone from filing an
17 action in civil court, a lawsuit, at the same
18 time, but we are a separate administrative
19 process. Yes, sir. Can I get everyone to kind
20 of move towards this table, and identify
21 themselves.

22 MR. DEUISSEL: Fasil Deuissel.

1 Should I write it?

2 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes.

3 MR. DEUISSSEL: Fasil Deuissel, I'm
4 representing about three cab companies, and my
5 question is really you are working for the D.C.
6 Government.

7 MR. EURE: That's correct.

8 MR. DEUISSSEL: If it is so, which
9 department you are reporting to? Are you
10 reporting to - who is your superior?

11 MR. EURE: Okay, as I said, we are
12 independent of the Metropolitan Police
13 Department. We're an independent agency, and I
14 as Executive Director, I report to a Board of
15 four citizens, a smaller board than this one,
16 but it's a board of four citizens and one MPD
17 representative by statute.

18 Those people are appointed by the
19 Mayor, but I assume when the statute was
20 created they wanted to create some distance
21 between me and the Mayor. The Mayor cannot
22 hire or fire me, and you want that distance

1 because the Police Chief does report to the
2 Mayor, so I do have an independence that allows
3 us to, you know, objectively pursue these
4 complaints of police misconduct. Thank you.

5 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you
6 so much.

7 MR. EURE: Thank you very much.

8 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Was there
9 another update from MPD, no? Thank you so
10 much. The next brief presentation we'll have
11 is from Ms. Wilson, Michelle Wilson.

12 MS. WILSON: Good morning,
13 everyone. Thank you for inviting me. I'm with
14 ECDC Enterprise Development Group, and so that
15 I can keep it short, I'll just go ahead and
16 pass this information out. You guys can just
17 pass it around.

18 I'm with a private non-profit.
19 We're located in Arlington. We were asked to
20 come here a few months back because we provide
21 small business loans up to 35 but specifically
22 for the taxi drivers we work with upwards of

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1 100 taxi drivers over the last ten years.

2 Right now we're looking, and we've
3 had a lot of taxi drivers approach us about
4 some of the insurance costs, repairs. A lot of
5 people are keeping their older vehicles and
6 that sort of thing, so we wanted to let you
7 guys know and so you can let your friends and
8 other drivers know, there are funds available.
9 These are loans, these are not grants, these
10 are loans.

11 We are supported by the Small
12 Business Administration which is a Federal
13 entity to work with minority small business
14 owners, so I just pass the information around.
15 It's there. There's contact information up
16 there. How the process works is we just need
17 to make sure that you have the appropriate
18 documentation that is required of you by the
19 District or Maryland or Virginia wherever the
20 case may be, and we can provide support as I
21 said for insurance for repairs on the vehicle,
22 for painting and that sort of thing or to

1 purchase a new vehicle and/or the license, the
2 cab number.

3 Typically the process takes a
4 couple of days depending on a few things, but
5 typically it's a quick turnaround process
6 especially if it's under \$5,000.00. We can
7 write a check pretty quickly, so that's keeping
8 is short. Are there any specific questions?

9 MR. HAMPTON: I have some.

10 MS. WILSON: You have some.

11 MR. HAMPTON: Is this firm a
12 licensed money lender in the District of
13 Columbia?

14 MS. WILSON: It's from the Small
15 Business Administration which is a Federal
16 entity. It's the SBA.

17 MR. HAMPTON: People are they
18 licensed to - people who cover loans in the
19 District of Columbia.

20 MS. WILSON: No, we do the loans.
21 We borrow money from the SBA to do loans in the
22 D.C. Metro area. We do about \$1 million in

1 small business loans per year.

2 MR. HAMPTON: Okay, these are
3 collateralized loans?

4 MS. WILSON: For the smaller loans,
5 probably not. You didn't say your name, I'm
6 sorry.

7 MR. HAMPTON: My name is Thomas
8 Hampton, and I'm going to be a community voice,
9 so I'm going to stay up here. I just wondered
10 about the collateral.

11 MS. WILSON: The \$5,000.00 and
12 under are typically not. Anything over - if
13 we're looking at - because I know the numbers
14 and the cost of the cars have gone up
15 considerably in the last five years, so that
16 depends on what you're buying or what you're
17 looking at.

18 If you're looking at 35, possibly.
19 If you're looking for five and under, no.

20 MR. HAMPTON: One last question,
21 what's the interest rate?

22 MS. WILSON: You are looking at

1 between 10.25 up to 14.25 depending on a couple
2 of different things.

3 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Any other
4 questions for Ms. Wilson? Commissioners? Thank
5 you so much.

6 MS. WILSON: Thank you so much.

7 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: We would
8 like to hear from our Insurance Commissioner
9 unless, Mr. Bethea, if your presentation is
10 relatively short.

11 MR. BETHEA: Very short, very
12 short.

13 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, okay.

14 MR. BETHEA: My name is Ronald
15 Bethea. I wear a number of hats. I'm
16 President of Sedan Service Plus. We are a non-
17 profit group. We have been engaged in the
18 process for the last six years of putting
19 together financing for taxicabs, limousine
20 drivers, cab companies, and limousine companies
21 that are interested in putting on wheelchair
22 necessities, taxicabs or wheelchair-accessible

1 limos.

2 I'm very pleased to announce that I
3 finally found the people with the money, the
4 Council the Government supports. There is a
5 national program which has just been launched
6 nationally. If you just bear with me one
7 second because I want to read from the document
8 that was provided to me by Mrs. Wendy Klancher.
9 She's Senior Transportation Planner for the
10 Council Governments. I met with her on January
11 16. There is a brand new program called the
12 Successful Taxi Service Subsidy Pilot Program.
13 This is a national program. They're
14 specifically targeting the District of Columbia
15 and Prince George's Counties.

16 For fiscal year 2007 which we are
17 presently in, there's \$81 million in this
18 program. Fiscal year 2008, there will be \$87.5
19 million, 2009 \$92.5. I'm presently in the
20 process of running a phone bank which I have
21 been doing for the last two and a half weeks.
22 I've called based on the available information

1 from the D.C. Taxicab Commission website, the
2 cab companies, those that have working numbers,
3 and a whole lot of them that don't.

4 At the present time we've spoken to
5 six companies, and we have a commitment from
6 those companies. They are interested in a
7 total combined of 47 wheelchair accessible
8 units.

9 The grant money as it is broken
10 down will give the taxicab company or the
11 taxicab driver 80 percent of the purchase price
12 of the new vehicle.

13 These vehicles run about
14 \$40,000.00. In the past we've been able to get
15 Ford, Chrysler, and GM to come to the District,
16 and the Taxicab Commission assisted us, and it
17 was very well put-together presentation, so
18 most people know these vehicles run about
19 \$40,000.00.

20 There is a stipulation with the
21 program is that the Federal Government will
22 maintain, and this has been my concern, a lien

1 on the title of the vehicle for four years,
2 100,000 miles or four years, whichever comes
3 first, because most of us who have been in the
4 taxicab business know that the driver or the
5 company has to have a free and clear title in
6 order to register it and get tags, but in
7 talking with some of the company owners, they
8 said that could be worked around or through.

9 This specific program will also
10 provide subsidies for insurance. They will
11 also - the City of Chicago put up \$1 million to
12 subsidize wheelchair-accessible taxicabs to
13 help those companies defer that cost.

14 They will also provide subsidies
15 for training. I've contacted Mrs. Carolyn Haye
16 and tried to get with her so we could see if we
17 help the District of Columbia get some of this
18 money for training.

19 They also will provide stipends for
20 the drivers who are interested in participating
21 and getting these wheelchair-accessible
22 vehicles to pay them for their time to go take

1 the training.

2 Also there is money there to assist
3 with getting marketing people to help to market
4 the services for the overall industry. That is
5 one program.

6 The second program is called the
7 53-10 Program. The 53-10 Program comes under
8 the Department of Transportation under D.C.
9 Gov. This program has been used in the past to
10 assist senior citizen homes as well as other
11 non-profit entities to get wheelchair-
12 accessible 16-passenger vans.

13 The District, because of the dire
14 need for wheelchair-accessibles, the vehicles
15 that can handle the riding wheelchairs, they
16 have come into the game, and they're going to
17 also make that program available for the cab
18 companies or the cab drivers.

19 The problem is is the time line on
20 the program. Deadline for the 53-10 Program is
21 April 19th which would not give anybody a
22 chance to get their proposals together and get

1 it submitted.

2 The guidelines for this new Freedom
3 Program, they have not even - the Board at the
4 Council of Governments has not even approved
5 the plan, coordination plan, so it will be
6 sometime in May before the applications will
7 come out.

8 My organization, Sedan Service
9 Plus, has spearheaded a program with the Small
10 Business Development Center at the University
11 of the District of Columbia called the Taxicab
12 and Limousine Upward Mobility Program.

13 I spoke with the Executive
14 Director, Mr. Calvin Johnson, the day before
15 yesterday, and we're going to see if we will be
16 able to get the lenders to look at lending
17 those cab drivers or cab companies the 20
18 percent down so they will have the matching
19 money that they will need to be qualified for
20 this grant.

21 The grant you don't have to pay
22 back, but you're going to have to come up with

1 20 percent, so we're looking into that as I
2 speak. This is an ongoing process. I put in a
3 lot of man hours and a lot of time trying to
4 help deal with these problems. Finally we got
5 some people with the money.

6 They understand the problems, and
7 they're going to have to be addressed, so
8 anyone who needs to get in contact with me,
9 our number is 246, 202-246-4924, or you can
10 send me an e-mail at Origins11, number 11, at
11 netzero.com, and I will be calling your company
12 and those companies that I have not been able
13 to reach I put the date, the time, and whatever
14 response I got from the voice mail. If nobody
15 answered I said, no answer, because I want to
16 make sure that people are aware of this money
17 because this is a national program.
18 Origins11@netzero.com

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Origins.

20 MR. BETHEA: O-R-I-G-I-N-S 11.

21 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Eleven
22 spelled out?

1 MR. BETHEA: Yes, number 11, just
2 like number 11. Two ones, yes, @netzero.com,
3 because this is a national program so that
4 means that people from all over the country
5 will be applying for these funds, but I think
6 because of the very unique situation with
7 Walter Reed and with all these veterans coming
8 into the City from and the GIs coming back from
9 Iraq, there's a dire, dire need for these
10 wheelchair-accessible vehicles. Thank you very
11 much.

12 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you
13 so much, Mr. Bethea. Any questions for Mr.
14 Bethea from the Commissioners? Mr. Tapscott.

15 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Yes, I have
16 one, what role do you want the Commission to
17 play in this?

18 MR. BETHEA: Basically none, Mr.
19 Tapscott, because they have played no role.
20 I've been very candid and honest as I possibly
21 can because I have been through too many
22 headaches with the Commission. I would like

1 some input from the Commission, but at this
2 point in time until I can see where this
3 Commission is going as it relates to the
4 Council and their decision with the Commission,
5 there's not a whole lot that I'm trying -
6 really looking for from the Commission because
7 there are issues about, as you said, about the
8 rates, what people can charge.

9 I have found in a national
10 conference that I was able to part of that
11 Easter Seals put on. They brought in cab
12 companies from all over the United States. We
13 met right over here in Arlington. I met with
14 the General Counsel. I found that all of the
15 cab companies have set up this co-op, and all
16 of the companies who have these wheelchair-
17 accessible taxis including Red Top, they've got
18 those grants and paid for those vehicles free,
19 basically free of charge, and they are being
20 subsidized, the fare is being subsidized
21 through these federal grant monies.

22 This is a fact, so what I'm saying

1 is rather than me bumping heads, I have just
2 basically took the position because when you -
3 we've been through the wars. I've taken the
4 position is not that I'm don't want to involve
5 the Commission. It's not that problem.

6 I'm saying I'm too busy when I come
7 over and I see all the other issues that you
8 all got to deal with, I've been steadfast with
9 trying to work with the issue of wheelchair
10 accessibility for taxicabs and limousines, and
11 on the limousine side, there's a great need.

12 There's also a great need on the
13 taxicab side. Seven percent of the population
14 based in the Metropolitan area, they've got
15 over 220, 210,000 people who are physically
16 challenged. There is a market.

17 The problem is because the
18 disability community knows that the cab
19 companies in the District didn't have the
20 equipment, they don't even call the dispatch
21 for the services.

22 I have spoken with every operator

1 at every dispatch service for every cab company
2 in the City, and they said the people don't
3 call us because they know we don't have the
4 equipment.

5 It's not the services. Victory Cab
6 went out of business I helped - I know - but
7 Victory Cab as it relates to it because I was
8 the one who helped push, try to get them
9 approved.

10 Victory Cab went out of business
11 because the man put down old run-down
12 dilapidated equipment that broke down, and the
13 vehicles shouldn't have been on the street in
14 the first place.

15 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you,
16 Mr. Bethea.

17 MR. BETHEA: Thank you very much.

18 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Someone in
19 the audience I think has a question.

20 MR. LEBET: I have two. First of
21 all the \$40,000.00 cost, does that include
22 conversion?

1 MR. BETHEA: That's the conversion
2 fee all of that. The basic price, Ford,
3 Chrysler and GM, all three vehicles run about
4 the same cost with the conversion, and those
5 units run about \$40,000.00.

6 Ford uses the Windstar, Chrysler
7 uses what they have, GM has both a Grand -
8 they've got two or three different vehicles.
9 They retrofit those chassis to meet disability
10 specifications, and this is one of the things
11 that I've had to try to go through with dealing
12 with the grant manager for the D.C. Government
13 finding out after the 20 percent is in by the
14 companies, how long will it take for them to
15 get their money so we can streamline the
16 process because we want to keep this thing
17 under six months because this thing can drag
18 out a year and a half.

19 We're looking at how can that money
20 come quicker.

21 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you
22 so much.

1 MR. BETHEA: You're welcome.

2 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you
3 so very much. Okay, thank you so very much. I
4 think this has been very, very helpful. I
5 neglected to sort of point out when we started
6 this agenda that we do have what's considered a
7 public hearing on a specific regulation, but we
8 don't expect that to go very long, but we, of
9 course, want our favorite guest to -

10 MR. HAMPTON: Thank you very much,
11 Ms. Thompson and the Commission. I'm Tom
12 Hampton. I'm going to pull over here. I think
13 my name is already on there, and first of all I
14 just wanted to say, always come and talk about
15 insurance and the taxicab insurance
16 specifically, but I want to give you a little
17 bit of oversight because I was listening to her
18 presentation. We do regulate banks, insurance
19 companies, and securities firms, and the banks,
20 we regulate the community banks. We have three
21 now community banks that we regulate.

22 I'm dealing a lot now with

1 mortgages and brokers to look in the papers,
2 the sub-prime market and how that situation is
3 happening with some of our lower, our
4 underserved communities and how that's
5 affecting those people. We are going to have a
6 hearing at one o'clock today to discuss that
7 particular issue. I hope I make it out of
8 here.

9 But anyway, so we do a lot more
10 than just insurance, and just so people who
11 need help that most of you guys are District of
12 Columbia. If not, most of you know me. Call
13 our offices, and we'll make sure that we can
14 try to help you or assist you on any financial
15 services needs that you have.

16 In terms of the three things that
17 Ms. Thompson's asked me to pretty much address,
18 one, I thought we had fixed, but it seems that
19 it's not fixed and that's dealing with this -
20 what evidence do drivers have that they have
21 insurance.

22 What I intended to do, and I'm

1 going to go back to my staff and find out why
2 it didn't happen, was to make sure drivers who
3 went to the insurance companies - now let me
4 just go back a step.

5 I think it was `05, at the end of
6 December `05, when we had that big meeting at
7 the Management Hotel, and again in `06 I said I
8 was going to get a rulemaking put through which
9 we were going to have a six-month policy. It
10 was going to give the companies the option
11 would require the companies to provide an
12 option of increasing the minimum levels of
13 coverage for drivers, kill the sticker fees
14 that's collected based on these insurance - I
15 mean these premiums coming through. The cab
16 companies were getting sticker fees and things
17 of that nature which I thought was a little bit
18 onerous and we shouldn't be doing that, and try
19 to provide additional coverages like uninsured
20 motorist coverage, medical coverage for
21 drivers, and other types of coverages.

22 All that stuff went through but

1 still it didn't effectuate the problem, and I'm
2 going to go over some of the reasons why it
3 didn't and why it didn't help the problem, but
4 I just want to talk about these cards.

5 This is the card that I get from my
6 insurance company, my private passenger
7 insurance company, the State Farm.

8 State Farm gives me a card. I was
9 under the assumption, and all of the companies
10 talked to me, that they were going to be giving
11 cards to any drivers or anyone who bought
12 insurance from them. I pay - right now I pay
13 on a monthly basis, but it doesn't matter. My
14 card says six months.

15 If I'm going by that - if my card
16 is not enforced, they will, State Farm, will
17 let DMV know that my particular policy is
18 either cancelled or I have not renewed it or
19 some preposterous thing has happened.

20 So I am confused on why people just
21 get a receipt in that card, but I think a
22 problem may be the majority of the drivers are

1 still going through the cab companies to get
2 their insurance, and I hear drivers all the
3 time. I ask them, I say, how much you pay for
4 insurance?

5 Now based on the information I
6 received from my staff, the highest insurance
7 should be in the neighborhood of \$35.00 to
8 \$40.00. That's the maximum amount you should
9 be paying on that every-two-week basis. Some
10 people are paying \$66.00. Some people are
11 paying more than that, so that means that
12 between what the companies are charging and
13 what the cab companies are asking or in
14 premiums is a big difference, and so they've
15 gotten around the companies, the insurance
16 companies, paying that additional fee to the
17 cab companies to now the cab companies are
18 saying I can't exist without this fee being
19 paid to me.

20 It's not our fault. We did
21 everything we could to get this reduced. You
22 can go direct, not that Mr. Bugg and Mr.

1 England, they came to me at last seven, eight
2 years ago. I did a notice that was supposed to
3 go in every cab company which says you can't
4 tie insurance to other types of fees, repair
5 fees, radio fees, anything else. You can't tie
6 the two together. They can't be done that way.

7 People were doing it and let me
8 know, and I would do something about it. I
9 have heard nothing about it, but when I go
10 around and I ride cabs pretty much all the time
11 because I want to hear the voices of the people
12 who are out there, the first thing I say is I'm
13 an Insurance Commissioner and how much are you
14 paying for insurance?

15 I hear from \$66.00, one guy told me
16 he's paying \$70.00. I mean what are you paying
17 \$70.00 for? You know, it makes no sense to me,
18 and I don't know how to fix that, but one thing
19 I will fix is this.

20 These cards, I'm going to make sure
21 anybody who deals with these insurance
22 companies is going to get a card because I'm

1 going to get on these insurance companies when
2 I get back to the office. That's the first
3 issue.

4 The second issue is Council Member
5 Mendelson has put in a bill that wanted to - I
6 mean that's the one that deals with taxicab
7 insurance. Yes, you wanted to -

8 MR. BETHEA: This specific thing on
9 the insurance, I have my name on my door, okay,
10 so we pay less as independents, we pay less
11 than -

12 MR. HAMPTON: You're not supposed
13 to, but go ahead. All right.

14 MR. BETHEA: That's just the point,
15 now my insurance premium is \$48.00 every two
16 weeks. Would that be in line of what the cost
17 should be?

18 MR. HAMPTON: That's probably in
19 line, but let me tell you something. That's
20 like \$24.00 a week which is pretty much in
21 line. We used to, when we were doing it, when
22 we promulgated all the rates for all the

1 companies were charging \$66.00 every two weeks.
2 Everybody knew that was what everybody was
3 charging, so they weren't competing. The
4 companies weren't necessarily competing on
5 premium.

6 You know, they would say, well I
7 got, so what they would do is, and I don't Mr.
8 Bethea is here, but they would tie in to the
9 cab companies, and they would compete with the
10 cab companies based on how much money I'm going
11 to give you back in sticker fees.

12 So what we said take that our of
13 the equation. That shouldn't be a reason to
14 get insurance, and really the insurance is for
15 the drivers.

16 I know a lot of times people don't
17 want to say that because the companies say, no,
18 no, no. We're protecting ourselves because if
19 they get sued and they don't have the assets,
20 then we get sued, yes, but you can get anything
21 to say this is what - who's insured by - from
22 Amalgamated to First Washington, or Columbia

1 Federal. You can get who's insured by them.

2 So I'm confused on why it's still
3 an overcharge from the amount that the
4 insurance company is charging to what the
5 drivers are paying, but I can't deal with that.
6 I mean, I've tried everything I possibly can.

7 That's maybe something that we as a
8 group, the Taxicab Commission and us, can deal
9 with the companies and take that out because
10 that to me, the drivers are paying enough
11 costs, they're doing a lot more work, and we
12 need to try to fix that. Yes.

13 MS. ROBINSON: Mr. Hampton, I can
14 just say for Columbia Federal, and we don't
15 have a card, but now they are issuing us a slip
16 with our receipt that has our VIN number, our
17 policy number, and all that stuff on it, and we
18 get it weekly.

19 MR. HAMPTON: Right, but what I
20 would like to do because that's just - to me
21 that's a receipt of your collection, and that's
22 fine, but it was two other things that were

1 supposed to be a component of that rulemaking,
2 one, everyone should have gotten a policy, and
3 I know some people have gotten policies, others
4 have not.

5 Everyone should get a policy.
6 That's the first thing. The second thing is
7 this. This card that you should be getting
8 should equate to a six-month policy period, and
9 if you don't pay, if you get cancelled our you
10 get non-renewed, that has to go through the DMV
11 and us, and that way we can effectuate this
12 process.

13 So you shouldn't be getting a
14 weekly receipt. You should have a card which
15 says I'm insured for six months, and that's
16 what I've got to fix.

17 MS. ROBINSON: Okay, that was the
18 problem. They gave us a six months' policy,
19 but after the six months they didn't issue
20 another policy.

21 MR. HAMPTON: Well that's another
22 problem I've got to fix then. I'm glad to hear

1 that because if they didn't give you a six-
2 month policy every renewal, then they haven't
3 done their job, and I need to make sure they're
4 doing it.

5 These cab companies know that, you
6 know, this is some of the things that I have to
7 fix, but I don't get - see the deal is we go
8 out and do examinations and audits on them once
9 every two to three years. I hear most of the
10 stuff from groundswell of the grassroots
11 community.

12 I'm hearing it now, I'm going to
13 fix it because I can go back to them and work
14 on it, but that's why I like coming to these
15 events, and I like talking to the drivers
16 because I hear more about what's happening
17 through the drivers than I'm ever going to hear
18 from the companies or my auditors going out and
19 trying to deal with them.

20 MS. ROBINSON: I just have one last
21 question. Another thing, you said you made a
22 component so that we could go say I have a

1 Yellow Cab, and I want to go to -

2 MR. HAMPTON: Columbia Federal or
3 Amalgamated.

4 MS. ROBINSON: Columbia Federal and
5 I want to go to Amalgamated.

6 MR. HAMPTON: Yes, you don't have
7 to go anywhere else, go right to him.

8 MS. ROBINSON: But it's kind of
9 difficult for us to try to change from Columbia
10 Federal to Amalgamated.

11 MR. HAMPTON: Why?

12 MS. ROBINSON: It's - yes, they
13 don't allow. It's kind of difficult to do.

14 MR. HAMPTON: They won't give you a
15 policy? They would give you a policy tomorrow.
16 He will give you a policy tomorrow. Your cab
17 company don't want you to do that. Your cab
18 company still wants you to go through them
19 because your cab company wants to get some of
20 the money that they pay into the premium. You
21 pay them 70, they pay them 40.

22 But I don't understand why, I mean,

1 I'm done on hearing this. That's not my
2 problem, but that's just a dig. That's not my
3 issue, but the point is this. The point is
4 this. We wanted the drivers, the intent of the
5 rulemaking was for the drivers to be able to go
6 directly to the insurance companies and pretty
7 much usurp all of these other processes that
8 happen between them and the insurance
9 companies.

10 We will have - an the insurance
11 companies themselves told me they would send a
12 list of their insured drivers to every cab
13 company because the cab companies complaint to
14 me was how do I know that Carolyn got
15 insurance, and I says well, I went to the
16 companies. I says can you send something that
17 showed them a list of everyone you got insured,
18 and they said yes. We will do that.

19 This system, and I'm just talking
20 from my vantage point, I know you guys are
21 dealing with this every day. This is a
22 difficult system to change, but change is

1 coming, and it might not be from insurance, but
2 it's a whole lot of other little things in the
3 periphery that, you know, drivers need to be
4 aware of that's going on in the industry that's
5 going to change how industry is being - pretty
6 much being operated in Washington, but I'm
7 trying to make sure insurance-wise, one, you
8 have insurance that's cheap, I mean that's
9 reasonable in cost, that you get optional
10 coverages. Some people got new cars. This
11 minimum amount of liability will not cover you
12 in terms of new cars.

13 People want collision coverage.
14 They can't buy it from these guys. I know some
15 guys sell it through Bankers Independent or
16 whatever, but you should be having it all
17 consolidated together. The companies that you
18 buy liability from should be sending you these
19 other types of coverage, and they know that and
20 they've been talking to me about this for a
21 considerable period of time.

22 So I just want to go over a little

1 bit on this rule, and we'll - yes, sir, real
2 quick.

3 MR. SEEGARS: I deal with them. I
4 think that you should put together a program
5 for taxicab drivers where I think the insurance
6 is a fraction of how they park and how many
7 violations they get. That's why they charge.
8 There's a place of the driver's -- DMV when
9 they look at their driver's license and if they
10 see they got accidents from driving aggressive
11 and all of that, I think that's why the
12 insurance goes --

13 MR. HAMPTON: Well, let me just say
14 this real quick. We had insurance before that
15 didn't bring into these - bring into the
16 equation those different types of risk factors.

17 To be honest, if I have two
18 accidents with private passengers. If I had
19 two accidents, oh, I got an 80 - or if I go 80
20 in a 35 or something like that, I won't get
21 insurance because these are risk factors that
22 should be put into the equation. I have no

1 problem with them charging more, surcharging,
2 because you're a higher risk.

3 What ends up happening - what the
4 problem is, and I know people remember this,
5 three and four years ago if you were a higher
6 risk and they said we're not going to
7 underwrite you, guess what happened? You had
8 nowhere to get insurance, so what we've done is
9 develop something called an assigned risk pool
10 where we give people who are a higher risk the
11 opportunity to go into this pool, and they'll
12 pay a little more, but at least they have an
13 opportunity to get insurance.

14 The second thing is this. As you
15 pull more of the higher risk folks out of the
16 pool, your insurance for the people in the pool
17 should go down, and see, and that's the thing
18 that we also were trying to make sure that that
19 happened. My guys were looking at the premium
20 rate charges of these companies and make sure
21 that happens right now.

22 Okay, yes, I'm sorry, real quick,

1 and we'll go to these two issues.

2 MS. SEEGARS: When the insurance
3 plan for the cab companies do the insurance
4 thing for the drivers? When they do that for
5 the drivers, do they have to be a broker or an
6 agent or they can just do it as a regular
7 person?

8 MR. HAMPTON: Not as long as the
9 company, insurance company, is not paying them.
10 Before \$66.00 would come in, it all goes to the
11 insurance, net of this fee, and the insurance
12 company will put on their books \$66.00 less the
13 five, or six, or seven, or eight dollars that
14 they were paying back as a fee.

15 That amount of money that they were
16 paying back is a commission, therefore, that
17 person had to be licensed, but same thing for
18 me. If I go right now and take - Mr. Bugg
19 says, I'm going back downtown. He says I want
20 you to stop at the telephone company and drop
21 off my telephone bill. I say fine, I'll do
22 that. I said it's going to cost you \$10.00 to

1 do it. I take the \$10.00 from him. That's not
2 something that - I mean, that's the same kind
3 of process.

4 He can pay me to do that if he
5 wants to.

6 MS. ROBINSON: (interposing) --
7 okay, we can't do it once it goes over.

8 MR. HAMPTON: That's probably right.
9 That's exactly right, exactly right. They
10 found a way around it. They found a way around
11 it, yes.

12 MR. ORLEANS: I just wondered if
13 there was any statute that can prohibit it in
14 defraudment from putting out for bid and
15 contract for all of the taxi industry in
16 Washington, D.C. and related industries, and we
17 find that if they're going to operate in the
18 District insuring private auto individuals that
19 they provide a contract for the taxi industry,
20 and it would seem to me it would simplify the
21 process by which each and every individual cab
22 driver would have to secure insurance, and your

1 department would already make that he is
2 insured.

3 MR. HAMPTON: Now the only problem.

4 MR. ORELANS: It would be cheaper
5 as well.

6 MR. HAMPTON: Well all of the
7 things you said is accurate and true except
8 that we can't do that, we can't promulgate
9 that, and I'm going to tell you something, I
10 don't think I want to promulgate that, and the
11 reason being is this.

12 Every company - I'm out here now
13 knocking on doors, well, I'm spending a lot
14 more energy last year doing it, knocking on
15 doors, trying to get more companies to come in
16 and operate.

17 We only have four companies that's
18 operating in the District so far that's
19 Amalgamated; Equitable Liability, it's no more
20 First Washington it's Equitable Liability;
21 Columbia Federal; and Crown.

22 We have a couple or more that's

1 coming that I think want to come into the
2 business, but if I'm going to go out and say
3 Geiko, State Farm, you have to sell commercial
4 coverage which they do not sell right now.

5 It might cause them to say I don't
6 want to sell private passenger in a market that
7 you're require me to sell commercial, but I
8 have found ways to try to deal with that and
9 fix that.

10 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT:
11 Realistically they're with the market share,
12 they would lose all their market share for all
13 of the District of Columbia.

14 MR. HAMPTON: But the only problem
15 is this. If they lose their market share,
16 that's true, they're losing money, but at the
17 same time the citizens of the District lose a
18 company that's providing valuable service, and
19 I have to weigh is it worth putting 7,000
20 insured policies versus almost 200,000
21 policies. You have to weigh that, so the best
22 way to do it is through a volunteer process,

1 and we've been trying - we got a couple of
2 people that want to do it.

3 Let me just go real quick over to
4 Mendelson Bill, and I want to talk about a
5 couple of issues that were on the last
6 presentation real quick.

7 We had nothing - our Department was
8 not involved in this bill, this Mendelson Bill,
9 but really it doesn't do - okay, all right.

10 The bill - there's a bill dealing
11 with taxicabs. It says first thing is that
12 they're going to put minimum coverages, require
13 minimum coverage to 5-50-10, but that's the
14 required minimum coverages right now on the
15 insurance side.

16 If you look into the DMV where the
17 taxicab and the Department of Transportation
18 the taxicab regs, it has that first minimum
19 coverage which was 10-25-5. They have that in
20 that particular code site, and he wanted to do
21 was just update the code to make the insurance
22 code and the transportation code and have the

1 Taxicab Commission equal, so that's nothing.
2 That's just more or less harmonizing the code,
3 and that's fine.

4 The issue about surplus lines, he
5 says right now what he was trying to do, and we
6 addressed this when we got the assigned risk
7 plan up.

8 Before we used to have drivers
9 come, I think that came in once a week saying I
10 just got cancelled by - I got cancelled by
11 First Washington or I got cancelled by
12 Amalgamated because I had an accident or I was
13 involved in an accident. It wasn't my fault,
14 but because I have two accidents, and that the
15 underwriting guideline that got cancelled. I
16 have no way - no where to get insurance.

17 We figured a way to get that done
18 through this assigned risk pool. People can
19 have the opportunity to get coverage. This
20 surplus lines is having non-admitted companies,
21 companies who are not licensed by us come in
22 and sell the coverage if the licensed

1 community, the licensed companies, don't want
2 to sell the coverage.

3 I don't like that simply because
4 one, we have that assigned risk plan; second,
5 these guys would not be filing any rates and
6 forms with us because we don't know what kind
7 of rates and forms they have but more
8 importantly, if you have a question or a
9 complaint against a company that's not licensed
10 by me, I have no authority to go out there and
11 make them listen to the complaint and try to
12 address your complaint.

13 I know a lot of people come into
14 me, a lot of cab drivers come and say hey, I've
15 got a complaint against Amalgamated. I got a
16 complaint against my cab company, or I've got a
17 complaint period, we try to address these
18 complaints by contacting the powers that be at
19 these companies and get it done because they're
20 licensed with me.

21 If they're not licensed with me, I
22 can't do much, so that's why I'm not for that

1 particular provision. I think the assigned
2 risk plan addresses that issue.

3 The last thing it was going to do
4 is mandate medical coverages for drivers. Now
5 I think that's a positive thing, but the deal
6 is I have to figure out the cost of this
7 coverage because for every additional coverage,
8 if you mandate it, everybody's got to pay it.
9 It's a difference between mandating and making
10 it optional and make the companies provide it,
11 so the companies can say I will provide
12 uninsured motorist coverage or I provide for
13 this coverage so the people who need the
14 coverage can buy it versus saying everybody
15 must buy it.

16 So we're going to be - I'm going to
17 be commenting on this bill and hopefully I can
18 work with Ms. Thompson and deal with some of
19 the issues I see with this thing. I'm for
20 making sure drivers have as much coverage as
21 possible, cheapest as possible, but I'm not too
22 - I mean we have to understand the

1 ramifications of mandating coverages - not yet,
2 it's coming up, but it's not yet.

3 So, I'm sorry -

4 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Are you
5 saying that if I have coverage, hospitalization
6 and everything, this bill is going to mandate
7 me to take -

8 MR. HAMPTON: Yes, yes, yes, even
9 if you got mandated - you've got medical
10 coverages somewhere else, you're going to be
11 mandated to have medical coverage if this law -

12 Some people don't - some drivers
13 don't have, excuse me, I think the deal is -
14 the situation is the Council have heard that
15 some drivers, some, don't have health coverage,
16 and they're out, you know, one when you're out
17 of the taxicab, when you - if your taxicab got
18 into accident and you're injured, you don't -
19 you know, you're sick or you're hurt, your car
20 needs to be fixed, you're not making any money
21 to pay for the stuff that you need to do to get
22 back to work, so this is a way to try to get

1 some of those things addressed. I understand
2 some of the reasoning behind it, but still it's
3 an issue that we need to discuss in general
4 what costs versus benefit versus just saying
5 let's just slap all the different benefits up
6 without having a thought process of how much
7 it's going to cost the drivers, and that's
8 something that I'm trying to get a bill back on
9 the companies if they were to do it.

10 The second thing is this. Two, and
11 my commenting to the companies about what's
12 going on, and they contact me as well, two of
13 the companies said if this comes on in I may
14 not be in business anymore. I don't want to do
15 the medical coverages because they have to deal
16 with the doctors.

17 The doctor submits bills, sometimes
18 these bills are inflated, it's a whole
19 different issues when you're dealing with that
20 type of environment, and they don't want to
21 deal with it. That's what they're saying, but
22 I want to see it come to fruition. I want to

1 see them turn down this money. That's the
2 thing I want to see.

3 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: I'm paying
4 right now \$248.00 a month.

5 MR. HAMPTON: We're on the same
6 page. I hear what you're saying, probably
7 we'll talk after this because I want to make
8 sure I get to this other hearing, but the whole
9 I'm trying to make is I understand that it
10 should be optional. I'm saying it should be
11 optional, but I'm not a Council member either,
12 so if they want it to be mandated.

13 That's why when we have hearings, I
14 know we have people who come to these hearings
15 and they do get their voice heard, so maybe
16 they'll listen to that.

17 Last thing is I wanted to say this.
18 I know I've been, like I said, we do whole - we
19 work in a whole financial services industry in
20 the District. We're trying to do things that
21 we feel is going to be in the best interest of
22 citizens, but in the taxicab community, I need

1 feedback, and that's the only thing I can work
2 on because listening to the companies, you
3 would think that the world, you know, is
4 Shangri-la up there. There's nothing wrong.
5 Drivers are happy, everybody's happy. Tom, why
6 are you trying to make changes? Why are you
7 even involved in any of this mess, so the only
8 way I can get feedback, I mean, and I'm glad
9 that we have tried to get closer and try to
10 work together, and the Taxicab Commission as
11 well, but I need feedback on what's going on
12 because if not, all I deal with is the people
13 that are regulated, and I see them doing wrong
14 or see them not following the statute. We'd go
15 after them with fines, we do penalties, we do
16 everything we can to make sure that they do
17 what we feel is in the best interest of the
18 people that they're insuring.

19 The feedback is important, and I'm
20 glad I had an opportunity to come and speak for
21 a little bit, and if you guys got any questions
22 which I know you do not, I'll make sure I

1 respond - no I'm just joking. Yes, sir.

2 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: One
3 second.

4 MR. HAMPTON: Yes, you've got one
5 second, sorry.

6 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Say your
7 name and sign up.

8 MR. MAY: My name is John E. May,
9 Sr. I drive a Washingtonian Cab Number 20. I
10 wanted to ask you a question.

11 MR. HAMPTON: Yes, sir.

12 MR. MAY: At the Mandarin Hotel you
13 were confronted with Crown Service Company. At
14 that particular time I think one of the
15 complainants said that they were an offshore
16 insurance company and that you had no
17 jurisdiction for D.C., but now you just
18 mentioned that they are legitimate.

19 MR. HAMPTON: I never said they
20 were offshore, and I never said I -

21 MR. MAY: No I said somebody -

22 MR. HAMPTON: Somebody said that,

1 yes, but let me just correct that. Crown is
2 what we call a captive insurance company.
3 They're special in a sense that it's different
4 from the others, but we still have jurisdiction
5 over them, and if I can go just a minute on -
6 just give you some background on this captive
7 and just tell you what we're doing in that
8 marketplace.

9 I've been out promoting. I've been
10 pretty much all over the country promoting our
11 captive insurance market. We've got another
12 taxicab insurance that's a captive that wants
13 to come in, but a captive insurance market,
14 when a captive insurance company - I'm sorry -
15 is supposed to be only for the people in
16 associations, so if you go to Crown, you have to
17 be a member of Crown's association, and they
18 insure the members of the association.

19 Now that association could give you
20 some benefits as well, and one of the things
21 that we talked to Solomon about is what
22 benefits are people getting for this

1 membership, and he was working something - some
2 kind of process out to make sure that these
3 members got these benefits, but we regulate
4 them. We don't regulate them in the same
5 format as we regulate the traditional companies
6 because traditional insurance companies sell to
7 the total marketplace whereas Crown is only
8 supposed to sell to the association members.

9 COMMISSIONER TAPSCOTT: Well you
10 see that's what - because when you've mentioned
11 this as an insurance company of taxicabs, they
12 complainant say that you had not, and if you
13 had explained it then -

14 MR. HAMPTON: Right, and I
15 apologize if I didn't explain it then, but we
16 have 75 captives right now. We're trying to
17 get - I'm trying to get to 100 captives by the
18 end of the year that bring in about \$3 million
19 of income to the City and that's some of one of
20 the niche markets that we're trying to promote
21 to try to get more revenue to the City so they
22 can have more money to put in the budget of the

1 Taxicab Commission, my budget, and everybody
2 else's budget to help citizens, but that was -
3 if I said that I apologize. I just didn't
4 explain it right. Any more questions? Yes.

5 MS. DORCH-JONES: Good morning,
6 Madam Chair, Council, Commissioners. I'm
7 Officer Erica Dorch from Traffic Safety. I
8 wanted to ask you a question in reference to
9 the insurance card of even to the driver if you
10 actually had the insurance card as opposed to
11 like a receipt -

12 MR. HAMPTON: No, they only have
13 the receipts now it appears, and I'm going to
14 go back to the companies and try to develop
15 some cards.

16 Now I remember we had - this is the
17 problem of being around a long time, we had
18 stickers at one point, and the stickers were
19 being issued out of the Taxicab Commission, and
20 they would be going to the different cab
21 companies and they were pushed around.

22 The stickers was a problem as well,

1 and I think the issue about what the companies
2 were going to be issuing. I mean what company
3 is going to show evidence of coverage? We're
4 trying to find a medium, and I think the card
5 is the best thing they can have.

6 I know a lot of the cab companies
7 don't want it because if I'm not mistaken if
8 we've got cab company owners in here, some of
9 these policies are the cab company's policy,
10 and they have drivers under their policy.

11 If that's the case, we've got to
12 figure out the best way to get it. I mean, but
13 I'm just trying to figure how you can get
14 evidence of coverage, how you can satisfy, you
15 know, the enforcement people we have in the
16 City, and at least have everything all tied
17 together without having a whole lot of problem.

18 It's a similar situation with
19 private passengers like that because a lot of
20 these guys don't have their cards either. Some
21 of them do, most of the major companies have
22 them, but a lot of them may not have them

1 either, and we're trying to make sure that
2 every company that has either private passenger
3 or taxicab commercial have some kind of
4 evidence that covers through the cards, and I
5 think that's the best way we can do it.

6 MS. DORCH-JONES: Have any of the
7 drivers here been cited for not having the
8 insurance card?

9 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: One
10 second, one second, okay. One second, one
11 second. Tom, are you going to respond?

12 MS. ROBINSON: I haven't
13 personally been, but I have been privy to some
14 of the stings and some of the drivers who
15 wanted to join our organization that were
16 caught up with not having an insurance card.

17 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Let me add
18 that this is a true issue. The drivers are
19 getting tickets. It has come up particularly
20 as Carolyn has mentioned the stings when the
21 Capitol Police did an action, and so the
22 question is are those receipts legitimate? Are

1 they actually showing in our cover, so this is
2 a very critical issue which is why I placed
3 that on the list that we have got to address
4 this issue. It has come up numerous times.

5 COMMISSIONER PAHWA: Can I ask a
6 question? The receipts, the cards, the best
7 thing is the stickers. Don't you think the
8 stickers can - everybody can see the sticker
9 rather than they have their insurance or not.

10 MR. HAMPTON: Okay, all I'm going
11 to say is this. If it's will of the Taxicab
12 Commission to put the stickers back into play,
13 then that's on you. We don't issue stickers.
14 We don't have anything to do with stickers.
15 All I'm trying to do is make sure that these
16 people have evidence of coverage and that - I
17 mean if that's the Taxicab Commission's will,
18 so be it, but there was problems with the
19 stickers. I remember that. I've been around
20 enough to know longer than that, but if you can
21 resolve the problems, then, I mean, that's an
22 issue that the Taxicab Commission has to deal

1 with.

2 MR. BUGG: Yes, my name is John
3 Bugg. I drive Washingtonian Cab Number 1.

4 When you start talking about
5 stickers, you could buy more stickers at a
6 discount rate down at the bus station than you
7 could at the cab companies. They were selling
8 more stickers than the cab companies, so the
9 only thing you had to do is go by the bus
10 station and give them \$10.00 and you put it in
11 the window and go.

12 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thanks,
13 I'd like to - if you've got any questions of
14 Tom, he'll be around a little bit. I wanted
15 to, if you don't mind, keeping everybody for
16 quite some time, we do have one item that we
17 have to go through the process on the agenda to
18 get to ensure that we've met our regulatory
19 requirements, and as I mentioned we have a part
20 of this, we'd like to move into what - the
21 public hearing phase.

22 There is a proposed rulemaking

1 which has actually been before the Commission
2 for discussion, and what it does it changes
3 Section 11.3, and I'll read it for you.

4 Whenever the Commission is
5 requested to take ceremonial action, and
6 someone asked me what's the ceremonial action.
7 Ceremonial action could be where the Commission
8 decides to recognize a cab driver, recognize a
9 company, recognize a Commissioner, or recognize
10 anyone that they're authorized to, in fact,
11 regulate or have some interaction with.

12 The Chairperson decides -
13 determines that a regular or special meeting of
14 the Commission is not feasible, the Chairperson
15 shall endeavor to poll all the Commissioners,
16 and upon approval of the proposed ceremonial
17 action by a majority, and this is really the
18 only change that's taking place. It's now
19 saying by a majority of the Commissioners in
20 office.

21 The old regulation had a specific
22 number. There was - as you may be aware, the

1 Commission is nine members, but it probably has
2 not had nine members for awhile, so we try to
3 deal with the majority of the Commissioners in
4 office, and that's all the change is doing.

5 The Chairperson may take the action
6 in the name of the Commission, so it is similar
7 to a number of changes we've made here where
8 we're recognizing that we don't want to
9 hamstring the Commission by saying seven
10 members when at some point we only have let's
11 say there are only seven members in office
12 because we pretty much don't control the
13 process of the nominations of persons, but we
14 have an eight member Commission, and we
15 certainly will not do anything that does not
16 involve a majority of the Commissioners.

17 So that's the rulemaking. It's
18 been here before. You guys have probably heard
19 it because the process is you do it. We vote
20 on it here. We go to proposed, the proposed
21 gets published in the Register, then you do a
22 public hearing, and this is what this

1 opportunity is.

2 After this, it moves on. If there
3 are no comments, we receive no comments, it
4 moves to a final rule making after the
5 Commission says it can move to a final rule
6 making, so if there's anyone who wants to
7 comment on that issue, this is an opportunity
8 to.

9 Not seeing anyone, I'd like to now
10 move to the last phase which I think is
11 actually where if there are any - and we just
12 want to do this for a brief time, but if there
13 is anyone who has a public statement that
14 they'd like to make, we kind of jumped around a
15 bit.

16 If there is anyone who has an issue
17 that they want to bring up at this point
18 generally. It doesn't have to be that it was a
19 point.

20 I just want to say that I'd like
21 for that to be relatively brief if you don't
22 mind, okay, so Mr. Bugg.

1 MR. BUGG: Right, I'm from the
2 Washingtonian Cab Company, and the question is
3 basically the same as before. Mr. Pahwa, Mr.
4 Tapscott, gasoline has gone up 25 cents in the
5 last two weeks. I looked at the agenda, and I
6 was looking to see that this Commission,
7 whoever, would have taken the lead and say well
8 we've got to do something about this gasoline
9 allowance because the last fare increase we had
10 was never - they never addressed the economical
11 side of the taxicab industry.

12 So what I want to do at this point
13 is I want to ask a question as to what is it,
14 and I'd like to ask the Chair, what is it that
15 this Commission or any member of the Commission
16 have mentioned it, is going to do about this
17 particular thing because we need to deal with
18 that like last month.

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay,
20 thanks. Actually what has happened in specific
21 response to this is that the issue has come up
22 actually through actually one of the media

1 people have asked is the Commission looking to
2 do a surcharge or across-the-board fare
3 increase, and one of the things that we have
4 been doing as a Commission is we monitor
5 gasoline rates. This is - in fact I have
6 before me from February '04 to date the monthly
7 survey of regular unleaded gasoline in the
8 District, and we actually we go through using
9 AAA, AAA's news releases that has all the
10 fares.

11 As of yesterday, the fare, the D.C.
12 fare was 253. That that is, \$2.53.

13 MR. BUGG: Okay, could I correct
14 you there. The average taxi driver do not use
15 regular gas. Only AAA's only address
16 themselves to regular gasoline.

17 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: I know I'm
18 quoting regular gas, yes, I know that. I'm
19 aware of - and I don't know what the average
20 taxicab driver uses. I would imagine, you
21 know, I have an old car. I'm not sure that
22 they're using premium, but to the extent that -

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1 One of the issues that we have here
2 is someone would virtually have to do some
3 statistical survey to, in fact, corroborate
4 your statement.

5 I don't know that for a fact, and
6 I'm not questioning it. I'm just saying this
7 is what the Commission has been using in the
8 past is the regular unleaded gasoline as its
9 measure, so we started this - our survey. It
10 started in January 2004 because as you might
11 recall the 2004/2005 gasoline prices were going
12 up.

13 In fact January 16, 2004, is \$1.63.
14 All through 2005 it jumped into the \$ 2.00 plus
15 category.

16 In September 2005 when gasoline was
17 \$2.87 a gallon, there was a \$1.50 surcharge.
18 In January 2006 where it had dropped to \$2.43
19 is when the rate increase took place.

20 As of yesterday when we checked
21 with AAA, and again as I said, we're just
22 following the same dollar figures -

1 MR. BUGG: But most of the rate
2 increase - we didn't get a rate increase. We
3 get a rate decrease.

4 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: You may
5 have gotten Zone 1 decrease, but across the
6 board, ten percent to 18 percent was the fare
7 increase, okay.

8 I understand that you don't agree -

9 MR. BUGG: No, no, no. I'm not
10 talking about agreeing. I'm talking about this
11 Commission addressing themselves to the expense
12 that we have to incur out here in the street in
13 order to bring this -

14 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: I
15 understand.

16 MR. BUGG: Now the District
17 Government also attacks this survey, but they
18 don't own a taxicab. They farm this work out
19 to us, and it's up to the District Government
20 to make sure that this is stabilized.

21 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Mr. Bugg,
22 one of the things - I have a little bit of

1 history on rate increases out of the background
2 that I come from. Some of this has to do with
3 statistics. At some point if in fact there is
4 an increase in gasoline, the Commission has to
5 also consider that you weigh that against where
6 is it today versus when you gave the increase
7 because you've got to make that argument, we,
8 as a Commission, also two-fold.

9 Now what I want to say is I did
10 this monitoring, what I'm going to view your
11 comments today is that you have raised the
12 issue before the Commission as to whether there
13 should be a surcharge. This will now come back
14 to the Commission for this analysis.

15 You're saying it's not on the
16 agenda. I didn't place it on the agenda. I
17 knew, in fact, it would be raised because the
18 people have mentioned it to me.

19 I wanted to, in fact, ensure that
20 we have some statistics because my
21 understanding when we do rate increases, it's
22 not just on everytime gasoline goes up we can't

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1 react immediately.

2 So we need to look at - look at
3 these sustained raises. What other costs are
4 also going up for you, the taxi driver, and
5 make that kind of determination, so I'm going
6 to view your comments today as a request in
7 essence for the Commission to look to see
8 whether there should not be a surcharge.

9 What I've seen on the media is sort
10 of the prediction that the rates are going to
11 go up, that they're not, in fact, likely to
12 drop, and we're also going into the season
13 where people are traveling, so I'm going to
14 take your statement today as a recommendation
15 to the Commission that we need to look to see
16 whether we need to, in fact, either issue a
17 surcharge or a rate increase.

18 MR. BUGG: One more quick thing.

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Okay.

20 MR. BUGG: This Commission is
21 supposed to assess this industry. When I say
22 assess the industry, I'm not talking the ladies

1 and gentlemen who are sitting up here on this
2 Board here. I'm talking about going outside
3 and hire some professionals to assess this
4 every two years.

5 This industry have not been
6 assessed in almost eight years, and what Mr.
7 Constanantoni did, I'm not sure because he was
8 not qualified to do anything, but he comes down
9 to this particular thing because I've worked
10 with the last assessment - Mr. England and
11 myself, we were called over in Virginia to the
12 people that had the contract, and these people
13 put together that study and brought it back to
14 the Commission, and this is the way it's
15 supposed to be done, and I'm not taking
16 anything away from the Commissioners, but I'm
17 just saying this is the way it's going to have
18 to be done because it's wrote in the job
19 descriptions.

20 Thank you, maam.

21 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you
22 so much for your comments, Mr. Bugg. Are there

1 any other - anyone else who has - okay, great,
2 because I think our goal was to try to get out
3 of here in two hours, and we've gone a little
4 bit over it, so thank you so much.

5 MR. BRODIS: My name is Alonzo
6 Brodis, and I drive World Cab Number 3 and I
7 have not much to say, but I want to know first
8 of all, you are the Chairman. Is this here -
9 whose name is that on there? Would you like to
10 look at it?

11 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Mr Brodis
12 -

13 MR. BRODIS: I want to ask you a
14 question first. This is illegal. Mr. Williams
15 has been away from her six months, right?

16 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Exactly, I
17 know.

18 MR. BRODIS: Is that illegal?

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: I know.

20 MR. BRODIS: You know, well -

21 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Which
22 means for two years it's been on there. Mr.

1 Livingston's gone almost two years. We're
2 changing that.

3 MR. BRODIS: Mr. Williams has been
4 gone two years?

5 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes,
6 almost two years.

7 MR. BRODIS: You know before you
8 came here I asked Constantoni a couple of
9 questions. Number one is this. All of these
10 are cab drivers. We actually pay x amount of
11 dollars, and you folks are owed us, but it
12 seems as though, for example, people come to
13 visit here, they stay and talk for two hours
14 or an hour. We only get a short time. I think
15 that's wrong.

16 I think that's wrong, maybe it
17 isn't, but what I want to say to you is this,
18 Miss, is that we are treated like a bunch of
19 animals. That's my personal opinion.

20 First of all you have hack
21 inspectors out here stopping cab drivers
22 constantly. You have policemen stopping you in

1 stings in predominantly Black neighborhoods.
2 This is a fact, and most cab drivers know that.

3 There's one police, I'm going to
4 call his name, Green, he come up to you and ask
5 you for your face and they have him there two
6 o'clock in the morning. They don't stop the
7 cab drivers in Virginia, but they stop every
8 cab driver at 1800 Columbia Road, and he
9 stopped me and he asked for my face, and I says
10 it's sitting up there.

11 You know what he told me? I said
12 first of all, why did you stop me? He stopped
13 me and he said where is your face? I said
14 there it is up on the visor.

15 Well they changed that that we
16 didn't have to have it hanging down, so I told
17 him, sir, here it is, and I got the regulations
18 always in my cab, I keep right by me.

19 So I said well look, you read these
20 regulations. Oh, you know what, you know the
21 regulations, so what I'm going to you is give
22 you a whole lot of tickets. He told me to back

1 back, and when I backed back my car parked, he
2 said ow, you stepped on my foot. I told him
3 that was a story, but anyhow what I'm trying to
4 say is everybody in here knows Mr. Green, and
5 he shouldn't even be a policeman because that's
6 not your concern, I know.

7 Another thing is this. We get
8 tickets. If you go to 23rd and I Street where
9 there's the Metro, you know what happens?
10 There's no parking at any time. The Kennedy Bus
11 park there, the bus that has Maryland tags is
12 parked there. If we park there, we get a
13 ticket, so how does that work?

14 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: You've
15 actually brought this issue up before.

16 MR. BRODIS: Yes, and nothing has
17 been done about it.

18 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: And as I
19 said earlier and I specifically mentioned your
20 name.

21 MR. BRODIS: I know. I was
22 wondering you mentioned my name.

1 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes,
2 because I remember those issues, because of
3 those very issues you brought up, that in fact
4 at the next panel meeting, and I want to make
5 sure that you're there, that you - remember the
6 last time you brought up those, and you, Mr.
7 Bugg and some other folks brought up these
8 issues about these traffic signs and parking
9 signs, and your desire to have DDOT take a look
10 at these signs and to see how they can be
11 changed to assist the cab drivers in providing
12 services.

13 We'll let you know after the meeting
14 when the panel is meeting so that we can get
15 some specifics. We have some already that we've
16 gotten out of the record that you left, so -

17 MR. BRODIS: I think that we should
18 be treated a little better than we are.

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: I hope that
20 - I hope - that's the plan.

21 MR. BRODIS: And most of these
22 fellows - I don't even drive my cab that much,

1 and another fellow is saying that it's against
2 the law on 66, that's not true. That sign -

3 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: I wrote
4 that, yes, thank you -

5 MR. BRODIS: I'm just saying -

6 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: No, no, I'm
7 going to be here, so you can talk to me. I
8 would like to be able to close down the meeting
9 and, you know, it's a little warm here too, but
10 you'll get a chance to talk to me.

11 MR. BRODIS: You know what, miss?
12 I've been coming to your meetings since 1990,
13 and I've heard the same thing, but I'm just
14 saying -

15 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Mr. Brodis,
16 thank you -

17 MR. BRODIS: I have to give you, you
18 know, your rights too.

19 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Thank you,
20 Mr. Brodis.

21 MR. BRODIS: This place here needs
22 to be shut down and put back the way it used to

1 be a long time ago.

2 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: Yes, yes.

3 Thank you, Mr. Brodis.

4 MR. BRODIS: You're welcome.

5 INTERIM CHAIR THOMPSON: I would

6 like to adjourn the meeting. I'm sorry, is

7 there anything I left off? Thank you so much.

8 Thanks, everyone, for being here.

9 The meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

10 (Whereupon the above-entitled matter

11 was adjourned at 12:39 p.m.)